BING

SUMMER
1999

No. 122

THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

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Membership renewals fall due on 1st. January each year and subscription rates effective for 1999 remain as:

UK	£8 per annum
Mainland Europe, including Eire	£9 per annum
USA and Canada	US $20 per annum
Australia and New Zealand	A$30 per annum
South America	£11.50 per annum

All remittances should be sent in **£ sterling** payable to 'Michael Crampton - ICC' with the exception of (a) U.S. and Canadian members who should send their remittances in U.S. dollars to F. B. Wiggins (b) Australian and New Zealand members who should pay David Currington in Australian dollars (c) Mainland European members (not Eire) who should pay Etty Gits in £ sterling. For addresses see inside front cover.

Articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to the Magazine Editor.
Other Correspondence concerning membership, non-arrival of the magazine or other aspects of the club's affairs should be sent to the Hon. Secretary/Treasurer.

BING is the official journal of the International Crosby Circle and is published in the Spring, Summer and Winter of each year. Opinions expressed in articles are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the ICC. All original material ©Copyright ICC 1999.

EDITORIAL

It is with great pleasure that I introduce our Summer edition. A wide variety of contributions should contain something of interest to everyone and I hope you all enjoy it.

The highlight of the Crosby year for me occurred in May when I had the opportunity to spend several hours with Phillip Crosby in Los Angeles. Further details appear elsewhere in BING. Whilst talking about the Crosby family, may we send our congratulations to Mary Frances Crosby who gave birth to a seven pound boy Benjamin Connor Brodka in May.

I have now retired from my role as Senior Manager with Lloyds Bank and already I have been involved in giving a talk to the Pudsey Women's Luncheon Club and in a international popular culture conference held at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge and run by the American Culture Association. Roger Osterholm organised this and put together a panel comprising Ken Barnes, George O'Reilly and me. Further details in the next edition. Also I was in Dublin in June and had great meetings with George O'Reilly, Michael O'Toole and Frank Branigan. Michael and I were involved in an interview for a local radio station as well.

On the next page, Michael Crampton discusses the late arrival of the Spring edition of the magazine and the shambles involving the distribution of the Bing Crosby Information File which has involved him and me in much time and expense to put it right. Those of you who have still not received the File please contact Jim Reilly and he will send you a copy. Michael is busily putting together the arrangements for the annual Leeds gathering on October 3rd. and full details are set out in a separate notice.

We are all looking forward to the publication of Gary Giddins' book about Bing and yet again I must give you disappointing news. It will not now be published until October, 2000. However the delay has at least given Gary the opportunity to interview Phillip Crosby. Norman Wolfe's book is still in the hands of a potential publisher. Another person writing a book about Bing is John Goldsmith who hosts a Big Band / Nostalgia radio programme on WGEL in Greenville, Illinois. Since 1985, he has had hundreds of guests on his show, many of whom worked with Bing. His book is entitled 'Working with Bing' and will consist of recollections from Bing's associates in the three phases of his career. He hopes to have it wrapped up by early summer of 2000. John can be contacted by e-mail at Goldsmit@papadoc. Very pleasing to know that these books are in the pipeline and I gather that there are some radio and TV programmes about Bing being prepared as well. Incidentally, I have had some criticism about the coverage I gave to the miserable 'Mysteries and Scandals' programme in the last edition and please see the Letters section.

I am working on Lionel Pairpoint's radiography project at present and I have to tell you that this is absolutely magnificent. As soon as I can, I'll get it costed by a printer and then we can decide how to offer it to members. Lionel has, for the first time since 1989, not submitted an article for the magazine as he has been side-tracked on other issues in recent months. I'll nag him to make sure that he contributes to our Christmas issue. Leslie Gaylor has taken a rest for this issue too as he has very little to pass on to us this time.

See you at Christmas.

Malcolm Macfarlane

SECRETARY / TREASURER'S REPORT

BING 121 has been acclaimed by members to be the best issue of the magazine to date. Its appearance in bound form with high quality covers came about by accident because two pages of the magazine had to be added at a late date due to a printing error. The machine on which the journal was bound was being replaced at the time the book needed binding and hence the delay in sending out this issue of the magazine. Will all members please note that although we will always try to get BING to you in April, August and December, it may not always be possible to stick to this strict timetable hence the naming of the journals as Spring, Summer and Winter.

Once the magazine was issued members were fulsome with their praise, some of which is reflected in the letters column. Good quality coloured photographs of Bing are being sought to ensure that we can continue to bring you high quality coloured covers. As this issue of the journal is likely to become a collector's item you might like to purchase a second copy from me for £2.50 inc. of P & P.

NEW MEMBERS

UNITED STATES AND CANADA

Wig and Laura Wiggins are proud once again to be adding 50 names to the ICC role. We extend a warm welcome to all of you, including PHILLIP CROSBY to whom we are delighted to offer honorary membership and DOROTHY HART who is a most enthusiastic Bing fan and is the sister-in-law of Lorenz Hart the lyricist.

From Canada

Gerald Clark (Ontario), Donald Webber (Vancouver), Barry Birch (Winnipeg), Leilanie Lecours (Quebec).

From the USA

William Brinkman (MO), Barry Stapleton (WI), T J Martinez (IL), Dorothy Ward (CA), Rev. Jerome Heyman (MI), Jeffrey Scott (WV), Douglas Heinle (MD), Regan Harper (NC), Stanley Shipp (MI), Edward Cummings (MD), Jay Brodersen (MI), Patricia Dey (NY), Elmer Carey (OR), Craig Horak (OH), Joseph Onorato (VT), Greg Hammond (NY), Edward Queen (VA), Peter Casazza (NJ), Stephen Lau (MA), Paul Barstow (CA), Sue Paddack (TX), Manuela Jackson (FL), Craig Klose (NY), Thomas Walter (MD), Robert Greenfield (CA), Jane Fitzgerald (OH), Richard Rieve (VA), Robert Hohlmayer (OH), Jeffrey Ellish (IL), Michael Raycraft (IL), Paul Fisher (NY), Thomas Carswell (NJ), Daniel McIlhenny (IN), Edgar Bullington (CA), Thomas Mulholland (ID), David Robbins (NY), Thor Johnson (VA), Dorritt Green (VA), Harvey Lowe (VA), Peter Gallas (VA), Lyle Laws (WA), Charles Dils (WA), Irene Poulin (NJ), Dorothy Hart (CA) .

From Colombia, South America

Susan Horn (BOGOTA)

We also greet:

IRELAND

D King (DUBLIN 16)

UNITED KINGDOM

Frank Keogh and Gordon Young of CO.DERRY, Trevor Mildiner and Alex Stock of LONDON, Wilf Ford (CHESHIRE), Peter Gent (NOTTS), Leslie Miller (DORSET), Peter Aldridge (NORFOLK), Tony Winter (CORNWALL), George Whiles (SMETHWICK), Keith Miller (ESSEX), A C Baxter (HERTS), A Stewart (LEEDS), C M Ward (EDINBURGH).

To all new members may I extend a warm welcome and long may you enjoy your membership of ICC.

DONATIONS

Our thanks to Ray Forster for a most generous gift and also to Jim Cassidy, S. Wills, I. Orr, G. I. Robinson and M.A. Baxter for their donations. In the last issue of BING we omitted to include the name of Wally Oldfield who kindly gave a donation with his subscription. Many thanks Wally. If there are any other members who we have missed will they please contact me so that I can include your names in the next issue of the journal.

DEATHS

Sadly I must report the deaths of **Geoff Musselle** of Bradford, **Joe Brickell** of Paulton Nr Bristol and **Thomas Poulton** of Birmingham.

Joe Brickell was born in Bath in 1927 and grew up to become a semi-professional musician to play along side Nat Gonella, Bud Freeman, Cousin Joe and many others. He was a natural articulate broadcaster and he raised over £10,000 for charity to repay the kindness that the hospital staff had shown him over many years of being ill. Joe loved the jazzing Bing Crosby and he was a member of Tape Crosby for many years. Primarily Joe was a family man with two children and four grandchildren and when he became ill with bone cancer in 1990 he did his best to help others in similar circumstances.

Joe Brickell (centre) with (L to R) Acker Bilk, Pam Coster, Charles Singer (Cancer Consultant) and Roger Bennett (BBC Radio Bristol).

To all of the families we extend our sincere condolences.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS 1999

Happily I can report that all but a few of the eighty members who had not paid the dues last issue have now done so. Jim Reilly kindly volunteered to write to non-payers and the reminder brought a most positive response. Many thanks to Jim.

THE BING CROSBY INFORMATION FILE

Due to a misunderstanding at the distributors, approximately half the membership in Great Britain will not have received their copy of the information file. Will those of you who did not receive a copy please contact Jim Reilly who will post you a copy but please give Jim a couple of weeks to deal with your request. The file is very well produced and makes a nice and accurate addition to our collection of Crosbyana.

CLUB PUBLICATIONS

All of the publications mentioned in the last issue of BING remain available from me. We thank all members who responded to my request to reduce ICC stocks-please keep the requests coming.

I hope to see many of you at Leeds on October 3rd. In the meantime, my thanks to all for helping make the ICC a well-respected club.

Michael Crampton

Pebble Beach sold for $820 million

It was announced in June that a celebrity-studded group including Arnold Palmer, Clint Eastwood and Peter Ueberroth had agreed to buy the Pebble Beach Co. and its impressive list of property holdings from the current owner, The Lone Cypress Co.

Press comment describes Pebble Beach as "the legendary birthplace of the Bing Crosby Pro-Am Golf Tournament - the 'Crosby Clambake' as some called it." The deal includes four golf courses - Pebble Beach, Spyglass Hill, The Links at Spanish Bay and Del Monte Golf Course - and two resorts, The Lodge at Pebble Beach and The Inn at Spanish Bay along with the famous 17-mile drive.

Just think if Bing had held his tournament elsewhere. Pebble Beach might just have been another golf course.

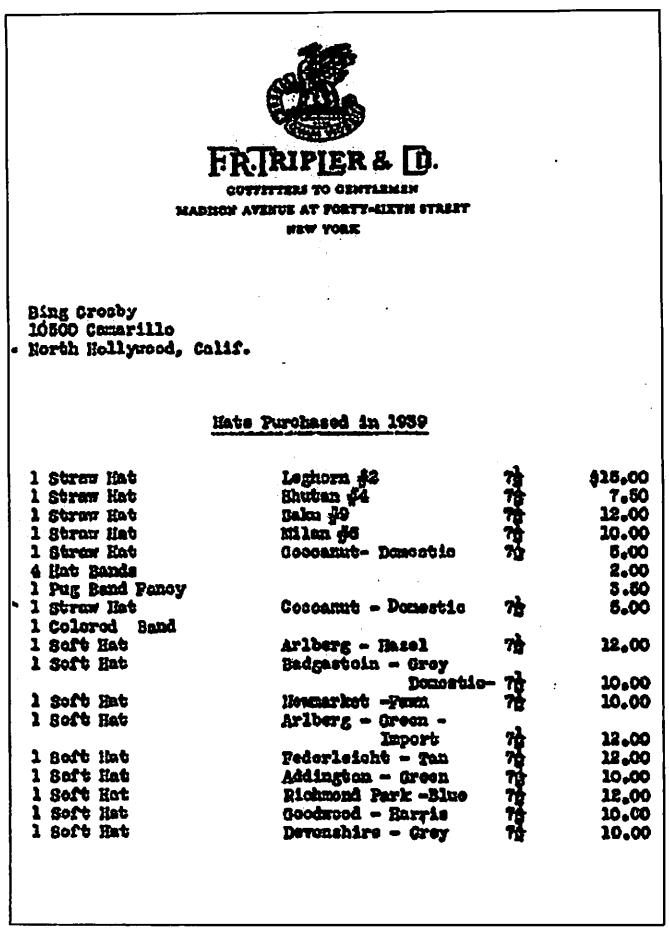
BING'S HATS

Last year, there was press coverage in the USA about a large cache of letters found in an old suitcase at a New York flea market. The letters were received decades ago by a young Marie Manovill from the likes of Bing, Johnny Mercer and Peggy Lee. Miss Manovill was trying to become a songwriter and Larry Crosby and Johnny Mercer gave her guidance. Her enthusiasm for show business even led her to enquire about Bing's hats which were supplied by F. R. Tripler & Co of New York City. In a letter dated January 11th., 1940, the President of the company wrote as follows:

"....Mr. Crosby has been a customer of ours for a number of years and enclosed is a list of hats that he purchased in 1939. I suggest that when writing the article that in describing his preference you could say he varies his colors, depending upon the clothing with which the hats are to be worn,. Green mixtures, brown mixtures, soft shades of tan for his felt hats in the town and country type, with occasionally blue mixtures. For his summer hats, he wears the coconut which is the tan as well as leghorn, Milan and Bhutan, all tan in color.

I would suggest also that you give the average price as being $12.00, even though he has bought a number at $10.00. The price is never important with him, since it is his desire to always have the new styles and he regularly writes to us asking for the new styles that come to us from abroad, as well as those we have made in this country."

The list is reproduced below and it seems that Bing bought 15 hats during 1939. Interesting reflection of how times have changed isn't it.



F.R.TRIPLER & CO.
OUTFITTERS TO GENTLEMEN
MADISON AVENUE AT FORTY-SIXTH STREET
NEW YORK

Bing Crosby
10500 Camarillo
North Hollywood, Calif.

Hats Purchased in 1939

1 Straw Hat	Leghorn $2	7¼	$15.00
1 Straw Hat	Bhutan $4	7¼	7.50
1 Straw Hat	Baku $9	7¼	12.00
1 Straw Hat	Milan $6	7¼	10.00
1 Straw Hat	Cocoanut- Domestic	7¼	5.00
4 Hat Bands			2.00
1 Pug Band Fancy			3.50
1 Straw Hat	Cocoanut - Domestic	7¼	5.00
1 Colored Band			
1 Soft Hat	Arlberg - Hasel	7¼	12.00
1 Soft Hat	Badgastein - Grey Domestic-	7¼	10.00
1 Soft Hat	Newmarket -Fawn	7¼	10.00
1 Soft Hat	Arlberg - Green - Import	7¼	12.00
1 Soft Hat	Federlicht - Tan	7¼	12.00
1 Soft Hat	Addington - Green	7¼	10.00
1 Soft Hat	Richmond Park -Blue	7¼	12.00
1 Soft Hat	Goodwood - Harris	7¼	10.00
1 Soft Hat	Devonshire - Grey	7¼	10.00

Malcolm Macfarlane

BING IN THE USA

WASHINGTON, D. C. RADIO CELEBRATES BING'S BIRTHDAY

For many years, the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area has enjoyed a special three-hour radio program every Sunday evening entitled "The Big Broadcast". Hosted by popular radio personality Ed Walker on public station WAMU at 88.5 FM, this program features re-broadcasts of complete shows from radio's golden age such as Jack Benny, Burns and Allen, Gunsmoke, Suspense, Dragnet, the Lone Ranger and many other favorites from the days before television took over the world. Ed Walker, who is an ICC member and likes Bing Crosby very much, also plays records from the 30's and 40's between the shows, and he often includes some of Bing's Decca favorites. We also are treated to one of Bing's complete Philco or Kraft shows on "The Big Broadcast" from time to time.

In response to my request, Ed Walker paid a special tribute to Bing this year on Sunday, May 2nd, utilizing several audio tapes and compact discs that I had provided. The majority of the three hours of "The Big Broadcast" was devoted to Bing's life and career. The first half hour featured a complete, unedited version of Bing's Philco show from April 30, 1947, with Groucho Marx and Dorothy Shay as guests. This version of the show, which was pre-taped in Chicago, included several fluffs and out takes that were eliminated before the actual radio broadcast took place. The fluffs were an unexpected and amusing bonus. Ed followed with all the surviving parts of Bing's first solo radio broadcast for CBS, as transcribed by station KHJ in Los Angeles on September 2, 1931, including the opening and closing commercial announcements. He then played the entire Queensbury Club sequence that was recorded during Bing's visit to London in 1944, just as it appears on the BBC LP "The Final Chapter", including Ann Shelton's comments about that memorable occasion. Ed Walker closed "The Big Broadcast" with the complete Command Performance program of February 15, 1945, "Dick Tracy In B-Flat", which has recently been reissued on compact disc in the U.S.

This was a magnificent tribute to Bing by WAMU-FM, which can be heard by more than one million people living in the Washington, D.C. area. I would like to thank Ed most sincerely for his staunch support of Bing, not only on this special broadcast, but also on many other Sunday evenings throughout the year. If any ICC member would like to have an audio cassette tape of this special tribute to Bing, just let me know and I will be pleased to provide a copy.

BING BY MAIL ORDER

Fortunately, various national mail order catalogs in the U. S. usually feature most of Bing's compact discs and video tapes as they become available. Catalog sales have become a more reliable way to obtain Bing's latest releases than visiting your local music store. These stores continue to compress the space and attention paid to "nostalgia" and "easy listening" artists like Bing, so they can devote more of their space to the "hottest hits" from the latest overnight "super stars" of rap or rock and roll. That's where the big money is in the music business these days. The most frequent nationwide advertiser of Bing's compact discs is Collectors' Choice Music, P.O. Box 838, Itasca, Illinois 60143, or by telephone at (800) 923-1122. If you are not already receiving their monthly 100-plus page catalog, you should write or telephone and ask to be placed on their mailing list. Their catalog offers many imports, especially from the UK and Europe, as well as the latest domestic releases.

One Of America's All-Time Greatest Entertainers!

BING CROSBY

MY FAVORTE HYMNS & IRISH SONGS

20 Legendary Recordings!

HYMNS

The Bells Of St. Mary's*
Rock Of Ages
All Hail The Power Of Jesus' Name
O God, Our Help In Ages Past
O Lord I Am Not Worthy
What A Friend We Have In Jesus
He Leadeth Me
Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty
Mother Dear, O Pray For Me
Peace Prayer Of Saint Francis*

IRISH SONGS

Danny Boy
When Irish Eyes Are Smiling
Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral
McNamara's Band
Oh! 'Tis Sweet To Think With Ann Blyth
The Rose Of Tralee
Dear Old Donegal
How Can You Buy Killarney?
Galway Bay*
St. Patrick's Day Parade*

*BONUS TRACKS ON CD ONLY

Cherished for his uniquely personal vocal style and warm stage and screen personality, Harry Lillis "Bing" Crosby (he picked up his nickname from his favorite childhood cartoon strip!), will forever be one of America's best-loved entertainers. Throughout his illustrious career, millions of adoring fans thrilled to his countless recordings, radio performances, TV appearances and classic films. But he was first and foremost a vocalist, renowned for the relaxed, casual style he brought to all kinds of music.

Traditional Songs of Faith & Inspiration

Here are his legendary interpretations of cherished hymns such as *The Bells Of St. Mary's, Rock Of Ages, He Leadeth Me* and more. Bing's stirring, heartfelt interpretations bring more beauty and meaning than ever to these traditional songs of faith and inspiration. Here also are his exquisite renderings of great Irish tunes such as *Danny Boy* and *When Irish Eyes Are Smiling* — plus 3 Top Ten Hits, *Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral, McNamara's Band* and *Galway Bay*! A magnificent treasury, order yours today!

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If not totally delighted, you may return your purchase for a prompt refund of your purchase price — no questions asked!

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YES! Please rush me **Bing Crosby Favorite Hymns & Irish Songs:**
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___ G99-D **2 CDs** Only $14.95 plus $3.00 p&h.
My check is enclosed for $ _____. CA and NY residents add sales tax.
Charge my ☐ VISA® ☐ MASTERCARD® ☐ DISCOVER® ☐ AMEX®.
Card No. _____ Exp. Date____
Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State_____ Zip _____

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A most welcome recent surprise was finding Bing featured in a large, nearly full-page advertisement in "PARADE", a weekly nationwide newspaper supplement,

on Sunday, April 18, 1999. In this advertisement, a mail order company in New York named Roger and Webster offered two CDs for sale from fellow ICC member Bob Zipkin's popular MCA budget series, "Bing's Favorite Hymns", and "Bing's Favorite Irish Songs". This was, by far, the best commercial publicity for Bing that I have seen in years, as the advertisement appeared in Sunday newspapers throughout the country. Having worked with Bob Zipkin to arrange the release of these two MCA CD collections, it was a real pleasure to see them featured in such a manner. Hopefully, this will result in good sales and also remind the general public that Bing's recordings can still be obtained, even if they can't always be found in local record bins.

"VARIETY GIRL" RELEASED ON COMMERCIAL VIDEO

Universal Studios has released the 1947 Paramount film, "VARIETY GIRL", on video in the NTSC format as part of its Bob Hope movie collection. Although Universal advertises it as a starring role for Bob Hope, it is not. Actually, it is a film with a very thin plot about a young girl seeking stardom in Hollywood built around brief appearances by a large number of Paramount stars in cameo roles. Bing and Bob Hope do appear together in a golfing sequence on the Paramount lot and later sing "Harmony,", dressed in the checkered suits they had worn in "'ROAD TO UTOPIA". Also included as an extra bonus is the original theatrical trailer for "VARIETY GIRL". The catalog number is 83203 and you should find it in your local video store.

NEW FESTIVAL FILMS VIDEOS

Festival Films of Minnesota has released three new video tapes in its outstanding series of Bing's short films and television shows. Taken from the collections of fellow ICC members Bob DeFlores and George McCabe, these latest tapes include several previously unseen rarities as well as other familiar items which have been on video before. Even so, the Festival Films versions, as usual, are not only of much better quality but also are complete with the original commercials. Frankly, I enjoy the old commercials. Included in these new releases are the Frank Sinatra TIMEX show that was telecast on October 21, 1959, with Bing and Dean Martin as guests, on one tape; and two HOLLYWOOD PALACE shows with Bing as host on another. These are Bing's Christmas special from December 25, 1965, with Dorothy Collins, Fred Waring and a dog act that has to be seen to be believed; plus the April 1, 1967 telecast with Louis Armstrong, Red Buttons and Nanette Fabray.

The third tape, "BING CROSBY'S CAVALCADE", is the most interesting of all, having been prepared by Festival Films itself. It contains several short films, including the theatrical trailers for "SING YOU SINNERS" (1938) and "BIRTH OF THE BLUES" (1941), a 1945 War Bond promo featuring Bing and his four sons, the 1944 Coast Guard short "SWINGING (or SWINGTIME) WITH THE STARS", the 1963 television biography "THE ONE AND ONLY BING", and the 1954 pilot for Bing's General Electric television series with Jack Benny and Sheree North as guests. But the highlight of this third tape is a compilation of out takes from Bing's 1964-65 sitcom for ABC, "THE BING CROSBY SHOW", which provides a fascinating glimpse behind the scenes of television in- the-making. There are fluffs from everyone in the cast, including Bing, plus an unintentionally hilarious series of deadpan promos by Bing for every television channel on the dial.

All three tapes, in the American NTSC format, can be ordered directly from Ron Hall, President of Festival Films, at 6115 Chestnut Terrace, Shorewood, Minnesota 55331; or by telephone at (612) 470-2172. And remember that Festival Films also can supply any of Bing's feature films that are available on commercial video, plus Festival's own series of special videos featuring many of Bing's rarest film appearances. Just write or telephone Ron Hall for anything by Bing that has been issued on video.

Festival Films also plans to release soon a video tape of "DR. COOK'S GARDEN", Bing's last film that was made for television in 1970 and shown originally on the ABC network in January 1971. Hopefully, there will be many more such offerings from Festival Films in the future.

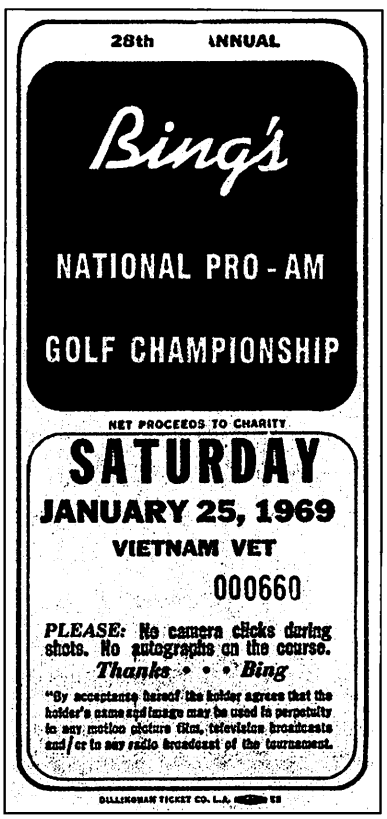
BING - THE MILLENNIUM SINGER

Rhino Records, an American company specializing in off-beat compact disc compilations, has issued a collection entitled "20 CENTURIES OF HITS", featuring the supposed number one hit from each of the past twenty centuries. The first fifteen titles are very heavy on church music, and it wasn't until "Greensleeves" and "Barbara Allen" made the scene that I recognized any of the selections. The 19th and 20th centuries are represented by two songs each, with "Old Folks At Home" (Swanee River) and "Amazing Grace" included as favorites from the 1800's. But it's the two selections for the 1900's that really make the grade--depending on your point-of - view, I expect! One is the legendary "classic" of the early rock and roll era entitled "Louie Louie", but the crowning glory is Bing's 1931 Brunswick recording of "Star Dust". Considering the untold numbers of recordings made since 1900, this is quite an honor for the Old Groaner. The informative (but often tongue-in-cheek) booklet has this to say about the 20th Century choices: "Since it would be impossible to settle on two songs that would fully represent the diverse musical styles of the past 100 years, we decided to select items from the two most persuasive styles of the century. To represent the Tin Pan Alley years, we have selected Hoagy Carmichael and Mitchell Parish's "Star Dust", written in 1929. Here it is sung by Bing Crosby (1903-1977), arguably the century's most popular entertainer. The second half of the 20th century is represented by the Kingsmen and their everlasting rock n' roll anthem, "Louie Louie".

If you would like to add this unique CD to your collection, the catalog number is R2-75468, and you should be able to obtain it by mail order or from your local music store. Way to go, Bing, and they even got your date of birth correct, for a change!

VIETNAM VETERANS AT BING'S PRO-AM

Many of the charitable and community activities that Bing sponsored and participated in went largely unnoticed by the general public during his lifetime. As the years go by, some of these have begun to come to light, which are greatly to Bing's credit and in marked contrast to the "hollow man" charges of certain revisionist biographers against Bing. One unusual gesture on Bing's part has been brought to my attention by Kathy Fisher, one of our most enthusiastic ICC members, who lives in the small community of Rock Island, Quebec, just across the American/Canadian border from the state of Vermont. Back in 1968 and 1969, Bing arranged for Vietnam veterans to be given priority admission to his annual Pro-Am Golf Championships at Pebble Beach, California. Special admission tickets were issued to interested veterans in those years, and Kathy has kindly provided copies of those used by her brother to attend Bing's popular golf clambakes in those years. Our thanks to Kathy for making available these unusual mementos of Bing's generosity to servicemen and women some thirty years ago.


28th ANNUAL
Bing's
NATIONAL PRO-AM
GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP
NET PROCEEDS TO CHARITY
SATURDAY
JANUARY 25, 1969
VIETNAM VET
000660
PLEASE: No camera clicks during shots. No autographs on the course.
Thanks • • • Bing
"By acceptance hereof the holder agrees that the holder's name and image may be used in perpetuity in any motion picture film, television broadcasts and/or in any radio broadcast of the tournament.

BING ON TELEVISION

A number of Bing's films have continued to appear on the national cable television networks in the United States during the past four months. Appearances on the regular broadcast channels are rare during this part of the year, although the Public Broadcasting Station (PBS) in the Washington, D.C. area has shown "HIGH SOCIETY" twice since January. This is the list of cable showings for the most recent period.

March 1999

THE ADVENTURES OF ICHABOD & MR. TOAD March 7 - (Disney Channel)
ANYTHING GOES (1956) - March 15,23,31 (Showtime Channel)
THE BELLS OF ST. MARY'S - March 4 - (Turner Classic Movies)
BLUE SKIES - March 22 - (American Movie Classics) THE COUNTRY GIRL March 31 (Cinemax Channel) THE EMPEROR WALTZ March 18 (American Movie Classics)
HIGH SOCIETY - March 12 - (Turner Movie Classics)
JUST FOR YOU - March 24 - (Cinemax Channel) ROAD TO SINGAPORE - March 4 - (American Movie Classics)
ROAD TO UTOPIA - March 9 - (American Movie Classics)
ROAD TO ZANZIBAR - March 9 (American Movie Classics)
ROBIN AND THE SEVEN HOODS March 19 - (Cinemax Channel)
STAGECOACH (1966) - March 1,7,20,25,31 - (Encore Channel) March 18,19,29 - (Fox Movie Channel)
THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT! - March 1,10,19,23,25 - (Home Box Office)

April 1999

THE ADVENTURES OF ICHABOD & MR. TOAD ~ April 19 - (Disney Channel)
ANYTHING GOES (1956) - April 4,5,8,14,19,20,27 - (Flix Channel) April 10,16,21,25 - (Encore Channel)
BLUE SKIES - April 2,15 - (American Movie Classics)
THE COUNTRY GIRL April 3 - (Cinemax Channel) THE EMPEROR WALTZ April 26 - (American Movie Classics)
HIGH SOCIETY - April 22,29 - (Turner Classic Movies)
ROAD TO BALI - April 11,12 - (American Movie Classics)
ROAD TO MOROCCO - April 22 - (American Movie Classics)
ROAD TO SINGAPORE - April 7 - (American Movie Classics)
ROAD TO UTOPIA - April 28 - (American Movie Classics)
ROAD TO ZANZIBAR - April 14 - (American Movie Classics)
THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT! - April 8 - (Cinemax Channel)

May 1999

THE ADVENTURES OF ICHABOD & MR. TOAD - May 4 - (Disney Channel)
ANYTHING GOES (1956) - May 25 - (The Movie Channel)
THE BELLS OF ST. MARY'S - May 1 - (Turner Classic Movies)
A CONNECTICUT YANKEE - May 3 - (American Movie Classics)
GOING MY WAY - May 3,17 - (American Movie Classics)
ROAD TO BALI - May 29 - (American Movie Classics)
ROAD TO MOROCCO - May 26 - (American Movie Classics)
ROAD TO RIO - May 28 - (American Movie Classics)
ROAD TO SINGAPORE - May 24 - (American Movie Classics)
ROAD TO UTOPIA - May 27 - (American Movie Classics)
ROAD TO ZANZIBAR May 25 - (American Movie Classics)
STAGECOACH (1966) May 16,22 - (Encore Channel) May 17,18,29 - (Fox Movie Channel)

June 1999

THE ADVENTURE OF ICHABOD & MR. TOAD June 4 - (Disney Channel)
ANYTHING GOES - June 4,8,17,18,23,30 (Showtime Channel)
A CONNECTICUT YANKEE - June 13,25 - (Encore Channel)
THE COUNTRY GIRL - June 6,7,17,18 - (American Movie Classics)
GOING MY WAY - June 6,15,21 - (Encore Channel)
HIGH SOCIETY - June 11 - (Turner Classic Movies)
MAN ON FIRE - June 1 - (Thrillermax Channel)
THE ROAD TO HONG KONG - June 8 - (Turner Classic movies)
STAGECOACH (1966) - June 7,8,29 (Fox Movie Channel) June 9,19,29 (Encore Channel)

The reappearance each month of THE ADVENTURES OF ICHABOD & MR. TOAD on the Disney Channel is in conjunction with a reissue on video of this animated film in celebration of its original theatrical release by Walt Disney 50 years ago. Can it really have been that long since Bing narrated Washington Irving's "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow"?

NATIONWIDE PUBLICITY FOR BING AND THE ICC

In anticipation of the May 11, 1999 release of ICC member Bob Zipkin's new MCA compact disc, "BING CROSBY'S FAVORITE BROADWAY SONGS", which I mentioned in the Spring issue, I was interviewed by a young reporter for the WASHINGTON (D.C.) POST newspaper about my activities on behalf of Bing and the ICC. When the article appeared on May 13 in this area, it resulted in a flurry of telephone calls from local Bing fans, many of whom are now welcome new members of the ICC. Please look elsewhere in this issue of BING for the complete text of the WASHINGTON POST article.

But that turned out only to be the beginning of a very busy month for my wife, Laura, and myself. The WASHINGTON POST also put the article on its nationwide wire service, and as a result, it was picked up and reprinted by other newspapers literally from coast- to-coast. So we have received a large number of other telephone calls from all over the country from people who wanted to talk about Bing and what he has meant to them and their families over the years. Many of these callers have also been pleased to join the ICC as well.

Based on these conversations, I know that the article has appeared in newspapers in Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island in the East, and as far South as North Carolina and Florida. Other calls came from the Midwestern states of Indiana, Minnesota and Wisconsin, and from California, Oregon and Washington on the West Coast. And we even had one call from New Brunswick in Canada.

Bing's birthplace of Tacoma, Washington featured a full-page picture of Bing on the cover of its weekly "Selection,' supplement, with the article and another photo of Bing, Jack Benny and George Burns on an inside page. I would like to thank the ICC members who took the trouble to send me copies of the articles from their local newspapers, and especially Joyce Lundberg, widow of the late Bob Lundberg (President of the former "Bingthings" Society), for providing a copy of the Tacoma, Washington tribute to Bing.

It's safe to say, that through the modern electronic media Bing received the kind of nationwide publicity on this occasion that has not been the case for many a day. And this incident also has shown that there are still a lot of folks out there who love Bing and enjoy being reminded of his wonderful legacy, even two decades after his death. The entire experience has been a heartwarming and humbling one for me. It has proved once again that the efforts of the ICC and other Crosby clubs to keep Bing alive before the general public are not only more than worthwhile, but also very much appreciated by those who become aware of what we try to do on Bing's behalf.

F.B. (Wig) Wiggins June 20, 1999

(Editor: It is amazing the effect a newspaper article can have and Wig's efforts will be translated into many new members and an increased awareness of Bing throughout the USA. In fact noticing the huge TV coverage of his films, it seems that there is certainly a Bing revival taking place in the States which is very welcome indeed.

Wig talked about a radio broadcast called 'The Big Broadcast' and Scott Whalen has advised me of a programme bearing exactly the same name which is transmitted by station WFUV 90.5 FM in New York. The host, Rich Conaty is a big fan of Bing and he features him almost weekly during part of the show called 'Crooner's Corner'. The program can be obtained via the Usenet newsgroup at alt.binaries.sounds.78rpm-era although it does take a long time to download. Another important broadcast is that from 12 midnight to 5am each Sunday from station WOR-AM which is presented by Joe Franklin. Ernest Sutkowski has drawn our attention to this as the station has a 50,000 watt output which reaches many States from their studios in Manhattan. Ernie supplies Joe with many Crosby CDs and he has also sent him the Bing Crosby Information File.

So now let's have a look at that nice article mentioned by Wig which is reproduced below with grateful thanks to the Washington Post.)

Fan Crusades for All Things Bing

F.B. "Wig" Wiggins likes early Frank Sinatra, has perhaps 20 Perry Como CDs and even thinks Rudy Vallee is okay. Still, it's hard to be completely convinced when Wiggins says he's "not just a Bing Crosby man" as he sits amid stacks of several hundred Crosby recordings splayed throughout his Arlington home. As he points to a couple of John Wayne and Buck Jones Westerns he owns, there is no playing down the 30 Crosby videos on his shelves, from 'The Big Broadcast' to 'Waikiki Wedding'.

But he's more than a fan. He's the American representative of the International Crosby Circle, which is not, as one member jokes of the name, anything terribly subversive or conspiratorial. Wiggins, however, is engaged in some uncommon tasks. The 70-year-old

retired Foreign Service economist works on behalf of the Circle, the largest of the crooner's fan clubs, to persuade Universal Music Group to unvault some of Crosby's estimated 2,000 recordings. The release Tuesday of "Bing Crosby: My Favorite Broadway Songs" marks Wiggins's fifth successful effort in as many years to put new collections of the buh-buh-boo balladeer, who died in 1977, back in music stores.

"I feel quite strongly that of all the major popular-music performers from the '30s, '40s and '50s, Bing has received less attention in the compact disc era, and he was sort of fading away except at Christmastime," said Wiggins, referring to Crosby's single of "White Christmas," which has sold more than 30 million copies.

Since he became the Circle's American representative in 1991, its North American membership has increased to 350 from 55. Founded in England in 1950, the group's mission is to celebrate the music, not the man. Wiggins's ability to build up the club dovetails with his lobbying of Universal. His relationship with the company's music division, which owns the Decca catalogue that includes everything Crosby made from 1934 to '57, is highly unusual.

"It's rare for a collector to be so highly regarded by a major record company," said Rob Bamberger, 47, a Circle member and long-time host of "Hot Jazz Saturday Night" on WAMU-FM in Washington. "Generally, collectors are regarded as nuisances who want you to issue things in the vault that will interest just a handful of people."

Andy McKaie, a Universal vice president whose reissue department will release a regularly priced Crosby Christmas collection in October, said many fans are antagonistic and demanding about putting out everything Universal has by Crosby. But that's not the case with Wiggins.

"He had his feet on the ground," McKaie said. "He didn't think we were trying to hide things from him. He understood the nature of the business a little better in terms of what we try to do."

Asked by McKaie, Wiggins compiled the written guide for a two-CD set of Crosby's complete Decca recordings of Christmas songs last year. He also wrote liner notes or compiled songs for Crosby's work with the Andrews Sisters and his million-selling singles, the so-called Gold Records.

Bob Zipkin, a vice president of sales who handles Universal's low priced CD collection, said he knew of the perennial popularity of the song "White Christmas," but never thought of regularly packaging Crosby until he met Wiggins. He has come to respect Crosby a little more since a budget collection of Irish songs from 1998 sold more than 50,000 copies, "an enormous" amount for his division.

All Wiggins asks of the record company is to list his name and the club's name and his address in Arlington.

Wiggins said his attachment to Crosby has some sentimental significance. The first record he ever bought, as a teenager in Albany, Ga., was Crosby's "Don't Fence Me In" and "Pistol Packin' Mama," a 1944 Decca 78 rpm featuring the Andrews Sisters singing trio.

Although Crosby is not especially recognized for his renditions of Broadway tunes, the new Universal package, featuring 10 songs from the mid-1940s to the mid-1950s, includes a few Crosby songs never heard on CD.

Getting a record company to stretch beyond the predictable re-heated Crosby hits is what makes Wiggins so valuable to Crosby fans. "We all have 25 copies of "White Christmas," 20 copies of "Swinging on a Star," said Steven Lewis, 45, a Circle member from Kansas City, MO., who started the Bing Crosby Intemet Museum. Wiggins scans the postings on Lewis's Web site for ideas and to gauge opinions about recordings. In February, the two-year-old museum received 145,000 hits, said Lewis, a college biology professor. In December, there were 293,000, which he attributes to Crosby's association with the holiday season. But it was through a poll in the Circle's triannual magazine, BING, that Wiggins helped create a list of possible music genres around which Universal could peg a new collection. Broadway songs were among the top choices. The new release features songs from "Oklahoma!" ("People Will Say We're in Love"), "South Pacific" ("Some Enchanted Evening") and "Carousel" ("If 1 Loved You") as well as a few lesser-known musicals of that era ("Song of Norway"). Crosby sings with a deep baritone, backed by string-heavy orchestras and, in one case, a chorus.

Beyond his work with Universal, Wiggins is the sole American distributor for a new British-made series for die-hard Crosby fans that when completed will have every Crosby studio recording ever made. Currently, the (so far) 18-CD set song has music to July 1936. Each CD sells a few hundred copies.

"There's no profit," Wiggins said. "It's just a personal thing." He doesn't like to take too much credit for whatever he's done to promote Crosby. "What has happened in the last six or seven years is encouraging," he said. "Bing does sell now in music stores. You can find him in music stores."

His next project is to get Universal to release more Crosby films. Only about 30 of the Academy Award-winning actor's 60 feature films are commercially available. "I don't know if I can do liner notes (the written guide) with videos, but I'll give it a try," Wiggins said.

To contact Wig Wiggins, the American representative of the Intemational Crosby Circle, call 703-241-5608. The Bing Crosby Internet Museum is located at :-
http://www.kcmetro.cc.mo.us/pennvalley/biology/lewis/crosby/bing.htm.

Adam Bernstein
Washington Post Staff Writer

(Editor: Well done, Wig! Some very interesting snippets too such as the 50,000 copies sold of the Irish CD. And how about the number of 'hits' received at the Bing Crosby Internet Museum? Remarkable!)

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from the transaction as a result of these entries
Please send all advertisements to the Editor

BING CROSBY RECORD COLLECTION FOR SALE

A leading American collector of Bing's records for over fifty years has decided to sell his entire collection as a whole. He will not consider the sale of individual items. This is one of the most complete and definitive Crosby collections in the world, and includes some 2,100 American and foreign 78rpm records, some 500 single 45 rpm records, some 1,000 long playing records, numerous radio transcriptions, V-Discs, film soundtrack recordings and test pressings.

Please contact Wig Wiggins (address on inside front cover) for further details if you are seriously interested in the opportunity to buy perhaps the finest Crosby collection ever to be offered for sale.

Ralph Harding, Crosbyana, 67 Shirley Drive, Heolgerrig, Merthyr Tydfil, Mid-Glamorgan, S. Wales CF48 1SE

OFFERS INVITED for the following 12" records

Br 20106 Face The Music Medley (Soft Lights & Sweet Music) NEW

BrE 0134 Pennies from Heaven / Pennies from Heaven Selection NEW

BrE 105 Gems from George White's Scandals Pt. 1 and 2 conclusion NEW

CoE DX 898 St. Louis Blues / Creole Love Call NEW

CoE 9459 La Golondrina / La Paloma NEW

V-Disc 598 Medley from Pennies From Heaven / I'll Get By EX+

Ken Merry, 28 The Avenue, Bessacarr, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN4 5JX

CASSETTES FOR CROSBY CONNOISSEURS

Rarer and hard to find Bing collections.

The British Institute of Jazz Studies, 17 The Chase, Crowthorne, Berkshire, RG45 6HT (tel. 01344 775669)

Wanted - BING magazines 1 - 25, The Road to Bing Crosby Parts 1 and 2

Matthew J. Marshall, 913 W. Lower Bloomington Rd., Center Point, IN. 47840, USA

Wanted - Sheet music for 'Christmas Dinner Country Style'. I am a concert pianist and am working on a new repertoire for Christmas time and I cannot find the sheet music for the life of me. Can anybody help?

Mrs. R. Viner, 71 North Drive, Hounslow, Middlesex TW3 1PT

"I have my late husband's collection of Bing Crosby records and wonder if anyone is interested in these."

Please contact Mrs. Viner direct for more details.

Michael Crampton, 19 Carrholm Crescent, Leeds LS7 2NL

The following are available from Michael:

"Bing Crosby on Compact Disc", A5 soft bound - with details of the vast majority of Bing's CDs. An invaluable reference book. 155 pages. £10.45

"Bing Crosby - the illustrated biography" - Michael Freedland's hardback biography. Available to club members at a specially reduced price. 127 pages, £13.

"Bing Crosby - a Diary of a Lifetime" - A5 hardback, a definitive look at events in Bing's life - beautifully illustrated. 96 pages, £12.

"1999 Colour Calendar", featuring many of Bing's rare sheet music covers. £5.

"BING magazine" - back issues of numbers 94, 95, 101, 104, 106, 107, 108, 110, 118, 119 and 120 available. £2 each.

BING BINDERS

Keep your magazines in mint condition by storing them in these specially made binders. They have blue covers with BING in gold on the spine and hold 10 copies, which allow them to either be inserted or removed, yet also open flat for easy reading. Costing £6.99 inc postage, £7.99 to Europe, £8.99 elsewhere, they are available from Ken Mason, 12 Wycomb Grove, Melton Mowbray, Leics. LE13 1EQ

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Crosby Clubs Around The World

The ICC is pleased to be associated with the following Crosby organisations.

Bing Crosby Internet Museum:
www.Kcmetro.cc.mo.us/~crosby/

Bing's Friends And Collectors Society,
Hobie and Cathie Wilson, 236 Andrieux St., Sonoma, California 95476-6909, USA (tel. 707 996 0257 - E-mail Mailcrosby@aol.com - Web Site address http://members.aol.com/CrosbyPage/crosbypageindex.html)

Club Crosby, BINGANG
Wayne L. Martin, Editor
435 So. Holmes Ave., Kirkwood, Missouri 63122, USA
(E-mail: ClubCrosby@aol.com)
(Members in Europe should enrol via Ken Crossland, 9 Arden Drive, Dorridge, Solihull, B93 8LP)

The Victorian Bing Crosby Society
Bob Neate, 22 Pakenham St., Blackburn, Victoria, Australia 3130.

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OTHER APPRECIATION SOCIETIES

We have reciprocal arrangements with the following clubs and societies for publicity purposes. They kindly

advertise our club in their magazines and we are very pleased to return the favour.

Sinatra Music Society, 183 Summerfields Avenue, Halesowen, West Midlands B62 9NU

This Society produces a most impressive magazine on a bi-monthly basis and includes features on all artistes performing quality popular music. The annual sub for UK members is £10 and write to Des Davis at the above address for details.

Sinatra Music Society, Dublin Branch, c/o Chris Hitchcock, 21 Roselawn Walk, Dublin 15, Ireland (phone: 01 8212418)

Tony Bennett Appreciation Society, c/o Mark Fox, 13 Sunnyside, Heckmondwike, W. Yorks WF16 0LN

Pat Boone Appreciation Society, P. O. Box 63, Sunderland, SR1 1PN

The International Petula Clark Society, c/o Terry Young, 38 Elmley Way, Margate, Kent CT9 4ES

Alma Cogan Appreciation Society, c/o Stephen Woods, 9 Canterbury Avenue, Bowerham, Lancaster LA1 4AU

The Sammy Davis Jr Association, c/o Paul Iacovou, 6 Thyra Grove, North Finchley, London N12 8HB

The Doris Day Society, 31 Kirkfield Rise, Ambleside, Cumbria LA22 9DX

The Judy Garland Club c/o Anthony R. Scarrott, Flat 3, 25 Holland Rd., Hove, East Sussex BN3 1JF

The Al Jolson Society, c/o Richard Selwood, 5 Abbotsfield, Wiveliscombe, Somerset TA4 2SU

Frankie Laine International Appreciation Society, c/o Tony Cooper, 18 Napier Crescent, Seamer, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 4HY

International Friends of Gordon Macrae, c/o Mrs. Pat Robinson, 47 Lea Mill Park Drive, Yeaden, Leeds LS19 7YH

The Dean Martin Association, P. O. Box 80, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 1ZR

Guy Mitchell Appreciation Society, 11 Kierhill Rd., Balloch, Cumbernauld, Glasgow G68 9BH

THE CROSBY YEARS

We reviewed the book 'Gord Atkinson's Showbill' in BING #115 and Gord has given us permission to use extracts from it. References to Bing are contained throughout the book and the final chapter is called 'The Crosby Years' and we now reproduce this in its entirety.

Bing Crosby was the most popular entertainer of his time and had perhaps a greater impact on show business than any other performer of the 20th century. MCA Records, who own all his Brunswick/Decca records that were produced between 1931 and 1957, back up that statement with staggering figures.

Twenty-five years ago the international sale of just his Decca records was said to be in excess of 400 million copies. During a 1993 MCA video tribute to Bing ("His Legendary Years"), hosted by actor-comedian Dennis Miller, it was estimated that a billion Crosby records have been sold throughout the world! Forty of his records were number one hits and twenty-one sold more than a million copies. Three hundred and forty of his disks made the hit charts. Fourteen of the songs he introduced in his movies were nominated for the Oscar and four won Academy Awards. "Sweet Leilani," "White Christmas," "Swinging On A Star" and "In the Cool, Cool, Cool of the Evening."

As an actor he starred in 29 top-grossing films and was the only star to be number one at the box office for five consecutive years. He received Academy Award nominations for *The Country Girl* and *The Bells of St. Mary's* and won the best-actor Oscar in *Going My Way.* He and Bob Hope were one of the screen's most popular comedy teams. His radio show was the top variety program of its era and his television specials were always high in the ratings.

Bob Hope put it all into perspective when he made this comment to me about the Crosby legacy: "The marvellous thing about Bing is that we still have his wonderful recordings and films and they keep putting them on, especially during the Christmas season-and they are permanent. They will he here when we are gone and that's a comforting thought."

It was my privilege to produce an authorized 14-hour radio documentary on Bing's life and career, *The Crosby Years,* for his 50th year in show business. I was fortunate to talk to over 50 of his friends and co-stars, and conduct lengthy interviews with him at his suburban San Francisco estate. The series also inspired a book entitled *A Voice For All Seasons,* on which I collaborated with my writer friend Sheldon O'Connell of Vancouver. My interviews with Bing took place in the den and library of his gracious French Provincial home in Hillsboro, California, during July and October of 1974. We were joined during the breaks in our taping by his wife Kathryn and their eldest son Harry.

Gord with Bing in 1965 prior to a TV special

The radio series was heard around the world in 1975 and re-broadcast two years later, following Bing's sudden death from a heart attack on a golf course in Spain October 14, 1977. He had just completed an engagement at London's Palladium Theatre and flew to Spain for a short vacation.

He was born May 3, 1903 in Tacoma, Washington, but raised in neighboring Spokane. Harry Lillis Crosby got his nickname from a newspaper comic strip. "Yes, the comic strip is where I got the name originally," he told me. "There was a comic strip called the 'Bingville Bugle' and in the strip was a character named

Bingo and when I was three or four years old I used to go around saying 'Bingo, Bingo,' and that was reduced to Bing and that was the name that was hung on me."

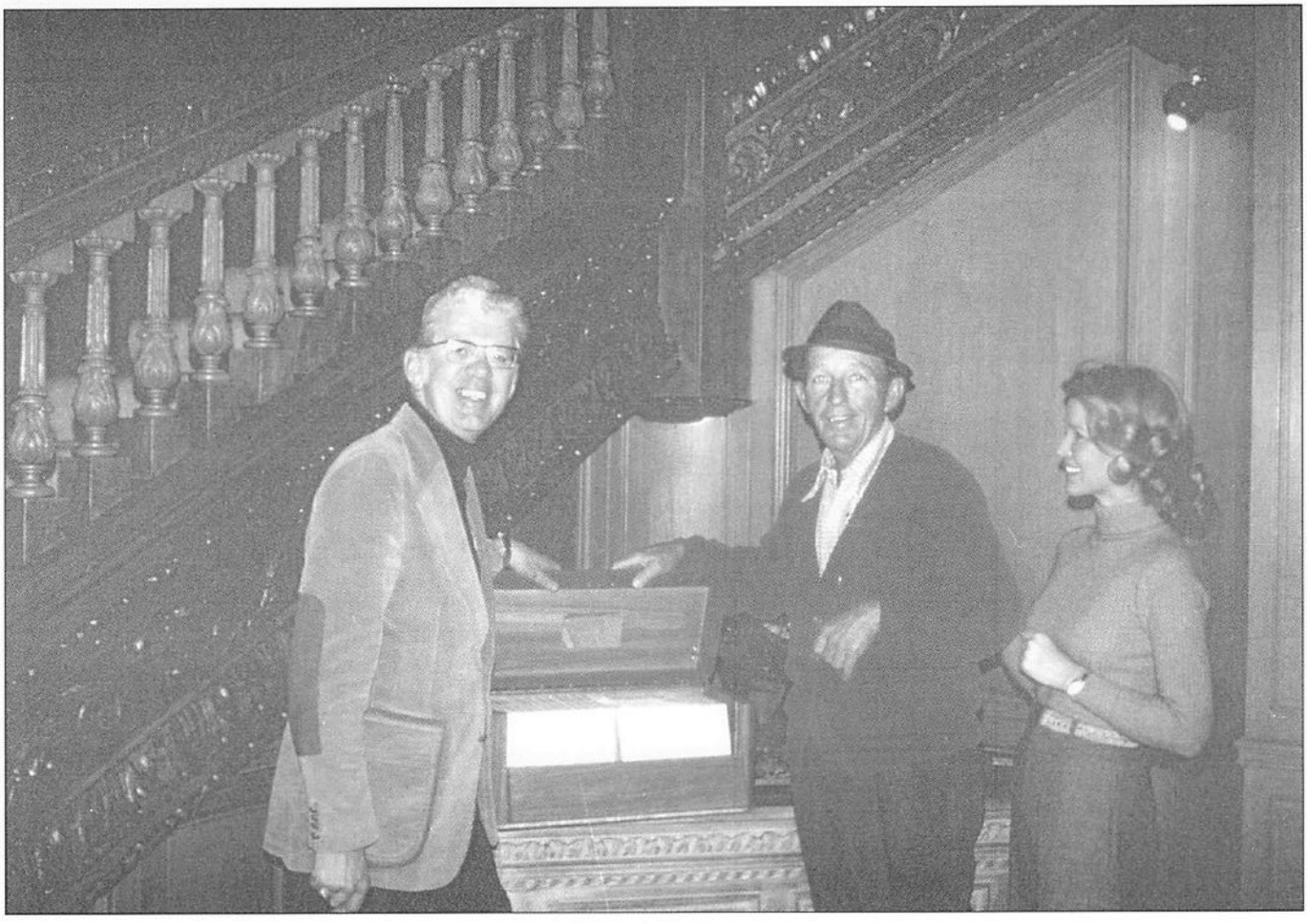
In the course of our taped conversations there were fascinating insights into his movie and recording careers. He looked back on the production of films during Hollywood's golden years with mixed emotions: "My chief recollections of movie making in the 1930s was the trouble they used to have with sound -- recording songs or photographing a song. Just to do one chorus used to take two or three days, because of the problems they had in placing the microphones to pick up the voice, without having the orchestra overpower the vocalist. But it was a lot of fun in those days. Picture making was more leisurely, the schedules were not quite so demanding, the budgets were a little more elastic and there was more socializing and more good times. For instance, back then at Paramount there was Marlene Dietrich, Gary Cooper, Frederic March, Fred MacMurray, Bob [Hope] of course, and any number of picture people, along dressing room row. It was a great place to visit, play cards or carry on with one thing or another, it was quite a social atmosphere.

"The most satisfying movies to me were the 'Road' pictures. I believe they provided people with a lot of fun. They were a lot of laughs to make with Bob and Dorothy Lamour; Jerry Colonna was in a couple of them, and we always had some interesting and amusing people in these pictures. *Going My Way* gave me the most gratification because it had an eminent success. It's still playing on television, entertaining people."

The man who was most responsible for Bing's musical versatility and amazing body of work was the late record producer Jack Kapp. "He was indeed my Svengali as far as the record business was concerned; he started out with the idea of broadening my musical horizons. Jack got me into every kind of musical category, western, Irish, Hawaiian, Latin American, Christmas songs and carols, singing with groups, singing with jazz bands, Dixieland bands, symphony orchestras, with practically every kind of a vocal and musical combination you could think of and almost every kind of song. For instance, it was his idea that I get into the Victor Herbert category."

In 50 years of recording the Crosby library had over 2000 commercial releases. Rosemary Clooney described it as "a monumental body of work." Since Bing never took his work or himself too seriously, it was a revelation when he told me that he was pleased with a few of his recorded performances. "There were a couple of records that I always thought sounded pretty good. One was called *Isle of Golden Dreams*. I did a few of the Richard Tauber things like 'Yours Is My Heart Alone' and some of the Victor Herbert songs. I thought the voice sounded pretty good on those, but maybe it was just because I was congratulating myself on having entered into a new field."

Occasionally someone will ask me if there is one recording in my collection of Crosbyana that is my favorite. From a performance level there are too many superb recordings by Bing to pick even a handful of personal favorites. However, I do have a sentimental favorite that I heard for the first time at his home--the



Gord presents The Crosby Years tapes to Bing.

story follows.

After completing *The Crosby Years,* my wife and I traveled to Hillsboro and presented the entire radio series to him. It was contained in a hand-crafted wooden case with a gold maple leaf insignia. Bing and Kathryn expected our visit but they were not aware of our planned presentation. As we arrived we were met by their butler, Alan Fisher, who by now had become a friend. We carefully took the cabinet out of its case and placed it on a table in the foyer. We could hear Bing and Kathryn singing to piano accompaniment in another room. Alan told them of our arrival and they walked into the foyer and greeted us warmly. Bing was delighted with the tapes of the series and the handsome cabinet.

Following a pleasant conversation and the taking of a few commemorative photographs we entered the living-room. We were then introduced to their pianist, and watched as they finished rehearsing for a forthcoming benefit performance. Then we were taken by surprise when Bing said "There's a new song called 'At My Time of Life' that was written for a musical adaptation of Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations.* John Mills is appearing in it in London and it is heading for Broadway. I'm going to record it next week. It's quite a song. I'd like to hear what you think of it." As we sat on French Provincial chairs in his beautiful living-room he began to sing. The piano player was obviously ad-libbing the accompaniment. His voice was strong and mellow and filled the room. He was 72 years old and the song was most appropriate for his time of life. It was a private performance just for us and left us almost speechless.

At the conclusion of the song Bing told us that he would be in Hollywood in a few days for a recording date and invited us to attend. As we left the Crosby residence Kathryn suggested that his rendering of the song was his way of saying "thank you" for my radio series on his life and times. The piano player confirmed to us that he had heard the song for the first time that morning.

The following week Bing called Rich Little's home in Malibu, where we were vacationing, and invited us to lunch and the recording session. Arriving at Western Studios in Hollywood I was especially pleased that as we entered the sound booth Bing began to record "At My Time of Life." Later, at our luncheon date, we were joined by Bing's English producer and his musical director, Ken Barnes and Pete Moore. We were also joined by Sonny Burke, who had directed many sessions for Bing and Frank Sinatra. He told us, while we were waiting for Bing to join us, that the first time Crosby and Sinatra recorded together everyone wondered at what time of the day the session would take place. "Bing preferred morning dates and Frank would only record in the evening. But Sinatra bowed to his boyhood idol and was on the set bright and early."

A year later my wife and I were in Britain and at the invitation of Ken Barnes visited his London studios. Ken was responsible for revitalizing Bing's recording career and produced an amazing collection of Crosby cassettes and LPs in the last four years of his life; he also wrote exceptional new songs for him, which included "That's What Life Is All About," "Seasons" and "There's Nothing That I Haven't Sung About." By sheer coincidence and serendipity we listened that day while the master recording of "At My Time of Life" was being processed for duplication. Although the show that featured the song never made it to Broadway, it did become an important Crosby ballad and my sentimental favorite.

This Yuletide the most popular recording of all time, Bing's timeless classic, "White Christmas," will once again be heard around the world. The film that introduced the perennial Irving Berlin ballad, *Holiday Inn,* co-starring Bing and Fred Astaire, was released for the holidays of 1942. Since that time the Crosby name has been synonymous with Christmas. In the dark days of World War II, Allied servicemen affectionately called him "Santa Claus Without Whiskers" for he was the embodiment of the Christmas season. He lives on in our collective memory, for it is still not possible to think of Christmas without thinking of Bing.

The Crosby library of enduring Christmas songs reads like a Yuletide Hit Parade, "I'll Be Home for Christmas," "Santa Claus Is Coming to Town," "Christmas in Killarney," "Silver Bells," "Do You Hear What I Hear?" and "Jingle Bells," to name only a few. His recordings of traditional carols have lifted our hearts and spirits for six decades. In 1973, in a December issue of *Variety*, the entertainment weekly, a feature story estimated that Bing's recording of "White Christmas" had sold well over 40 million copies. Typical of Bing's modest nature, he found that figure quite high, "That's hard to believe. I'll accept it and hope that Mr. Berlin gets adequately compensated. He's the one who wrote it and is responsible for its success." With several reissues over the past 20 years of his most famous recording, it is estimated now that its worldwide sales could be as high as 100 million. Whatever the figure, it is without question the best-selling record in the history of the music business.

During one of our conversations, a few weeks before Christmas 1974, Bing reflected on the impact of his most identifiable song: "I certainly didn't think 'White Christmas' was going to be such a hit. I thought it was a very good score for *Holiday Inn*, but I had no preconceived idea what would be the hit song. 'White Christmas' just stepped out, because it was wartime and so many people were away from home, away from their families, serving in the army, navy and air force and in faraway places - and a song like that is reminiscent of home and family, and that's why it had such an immediate and lasting impact, I believe." Bing's musical conductor for many years, John Scott Trotter, was also the arranger on many of his most memorable recordings. I wondered if he ever had a feeling that one of their collaborations might be a hit. "When we made 'White Christmas' I thought it was a very lovely tune, but I had no idea that it would turn out to be the most famous recording of all time. However, working with Bing and knowing the depth of his public acceptance, there was always a good chance that any of our sessions would be successful."

He also recalled how the song might have been recorded in a different manner than its now familiar arrangement. "There was an argument between Jack Kapp, who was the head of Decca Records, and Irving Berlin. The song was written for a scene in the picture that was set on the west coast. The lyrics of the verse began, 'I'm sitting here in Beverly Hills' -- Berlin thought it

was a marvelous poetic set-up for the chorus, but Kapp said it had nothing to do with the record. Kapp prevailed and we didn't record the verse, and as luck would have it, the movie setting for the song was changed later from sunny California to snowy New England."

When Bing heard Trotter's comments he had no recollection of the difference of opinion between Kapp and Berlin. "I don't recall a controversy, Gord; I know we didn't do the verse, not even in the picture. In fact it was done quite simply, sitting at a piano in a ruminative mood. There was no production, just a chorus or two with the leading lady, Marjorie Reynolds."

Holiday Inn has been acclaimed by several critics and film historians as the best original movie musical ever made. The charming and amusing plot concerned a talented but weary entertainer (Crosby) who left his ambitious partner (Astaire) for the tranquility of a country inn, where he produced shows only on holidays! It was a magical teaming of the screen's two incomparable performers, who were in top form as they featured a Berlin melody for every holiday of the year. In 1954 another Crosby musical, filmed in Technicolor with Rosemary Clooney and Danny Kaye, took as its title *White Christmas* and revived the time-honored song on its soundtrack.

While on his lengthy overseas tour in 1944, Bing couldn't do a show without bringing a little bit of home to the front lines with "White Christmas." At the time of our last interview his thoughts went back to those bitter-sweet wartime days. "Well, it was always a kind of a wrench for me to sing the song," he confessed. "I loved it of course, but at the camps and in the field hospitals, places where spirits weren't too high anyway, they'd ask for the song - they'd demand it - and half the audience would be in tears. It was a rather lugubrious atmosphere that it created, which you can understand, because of its connotation of home and Christmas, and here we were thousands of miles from either one. It was a rather sorrowing experience to have to sing it for these men and women when it made them feel sad. But I guess in retrospect that it was a glad kind of sadness."

In thinking back over his life and unparalleled career he made this final comment of appreciation and gratitude to his friends and fans: "To know that you have entertained, amused and made life a little more pleasant for people, wherever they happen to be, that's the greatest reward of all."

Gord Atkinson

(Editor: A great chapter from a most interesting book. The book can be obtained from Creative Bound Inc., 151 Tansley Drive, P.O. Box 424, Ontario, Canada KOA 1LO for US $16.95 (CAN $19.95). Readers in the UK, Ireland and Europe can obtain it from Gazelle Book Services Ltd., Falcon House, Queen Square, Lancaster LA1 1RN, England (Phone 01524-68765) whilst in the USA it can be obtained from Quality Books Inc., 1003 W. Pines Road, Oregon, IL 61061-9860 (Phone 815-732-4450)

KEITH PARKINSON'S
CELLULOID CROSBY

In the last issue of BING, Wig Wiggins' listing of Crosby movies on U. S.A. television tabled *Stagecoach* as having benefited from three showings last winter. We then have a reminder of how Twentieth Century-Fox worked at promoting the film through radio "interviews" with an absent Bing. They probably knew the film needed a hard sell to entice more mature audiences into theatres. They launched a major promotion through the now defunct *Saturday Evening Post* magazine and they commissioned artist Norman Rockwell to provide character studies to illustrate the series, which was in the form of a diary of the film's shooting. These superb paintings have stood the test of time better than the film they helped to hype.

Although it has nothing to do with *Stagecoach* the studio also happened to be undergoing an identity crisis at the time and felt that a name change was in order. Twentyfirst Century-Fox was mooted but there seemed no urgency in rebranding so far from the millennium and the studio logo remained topical for the next thirty-odd years. This year they knew they had to avoid the ridicule that film reviewers could heap on them if they didn't like a new release and from now on they are to be known as Fox 2000.

Previously, in Bert Bishop's *Bing on the Box* a couple of issues ago, he revealed that the film was now available on satellite television in the U.K. Bert was doing his usual thorough write-up of Crosby pictures that had been on television during October, 1998. *Stagecoach* was shown on Sky Premier and Bert queried what it was doing in the schedules of a channel devoted to showing box-office hits. He valued the film more than Leslie Halliwell's Filmgoers' Companion verdict of "absolutely awful remake" but had reservations about it being a box-office hit. Quiet right - it wasn't. Unfortunately, I have to take some blame for initially over rating the film shortly after its cinema release.

I made the mistake of comparing it favourably to its 1939 original in an *Armchair Cinema* article I wrote for Ralph Harding's *Crosby Collector* in the 1960s. That didn't go down well and I know I lost Ralph at least one subscriber who wrote to say he didn't want to receive a magazine which thought that all things Bing were judged to be good rather than viewed objectively. Looking back, it was folly to draw comparisons between an acknowledged John Ford masterpiece and the 20th Century-Fox remake. However, I'm prepared to stand by my original view that the film was a good tale well told. A

stand alone rating has to credit the casting, photography, sound and music score. In fact, Jerry Goldsmith's soundtrack album has been treasured by collectors for decades. I saw the film in ideal conditions in a small cinema equipped with a full-sized CinemaScope screen and well balanced stereophonic sound. The remade *Stagecoach* is now regarded as an acceptable western even though critics can't resist referring to it as an unnecessary remake. But no one listens to critics. In 1986 another version, 14 minutes shorter than the 1966 version, was made specifically for television. Bing's daughter Mary Frances was one of the all star cast. She was seen alongside Willie Nelson, Johnny Cash, Anthony Newley and other bankable names. Considering there was an abundance of singers in the cast it's surprising that no one sang a note. But then Bing's talent was ignored when Wayne Newton sang "Stagecoach to Cheyenne" over the closing credits of the 1966 remake. Of the made-for-tv version, one reviewer made the comment, "The stars made no secret of their disdain for the simple-minded script."

With home cinema having received a boost with the launching of digital broadcasting last year I believe it is worth revisiting the 1966 version on a wide screen set capable of providing surround sound in NICAM stereo. Forget comparisons and a good yarn will unfold, portrayed by a team of actors who learned their craft over many years in front of the cameras.

Bing probably enjoyed the two months filming experience even though his bursitis gave him discomfort. At the completion of filming in September of 1965 he presented the entire cast and crew with a silver key chain sporting a horseshoe link and a medallion in the shape of a stagecoach. It was inscribed "Best wishes from Bing".

It took Fox eight months to ready the film for release. They had reservations about its potential. Director Gordon Douglas made an apology once the critics came in with their verdicts. He said: "Frankly the story wasn't strong enough to be remade. Also, in many areas, the casting was weak ... especially Ann-Margret, who didn't look like a hooker." For me, Douglas's comments don't stand up to scrutiny. The story was sound. John Ford had fashioned a good movie from it. And Claire Trevor didn't look like a hooker in the '39 version. Plus the cast of Red Buttons, Robert Cummings, Slim Pickens, Keenan Wynn etc. had respectable C.V.'s even if they weren't top box-office names. Fox were operating to a $5 million budget and paid what they could afford. Perhaps leading man Alex Cord didn't meet expectations but the studio took no greater chance than RKO had when the relatively unknown John Wayne was given the part of the Ringo Kid in the film's first version. Cord is all but forgotten today by U.K. audiences. You could say his career peaked with *Stagecoach*. He did have the appeal of a second string leading man and he is better remembered in the States where he was in the popular series *Airwolf* between 1984 and 1986. Although he continued working well into the 1990s he was then used in supporting roles in the likes of *Street Asylum* (1990) and *To be the Best* (1993).

Bing, on the other hand, clearly did not think that *Stagecoach* would be his last major film part. In an interview given in 1966 he said:

"In all the years I've made films I think the public has never thought of me as an actor. I don't believe the public has even thought of me as a singer. I'm Bing Crosby. I'm a personality ..... a citizen. That's fine, but now that I'm a little past getting the girl in the movie - we can't all be Cary Grant, you know - it's a little frustrating. If I'm not thought of as an actor 1 won't get character parts. That's why I'm so delighted with *Stagecoach*. I hope it will open a few doors for me. After all these years it's pretty hard to stop. When I'm away fishing I look at the papers and see where they're casting a picture and say, 'Why can't I get in that?' Besides, if you work a little it makes the other stuff - fishing, hunting and so on - more fun."

Doc Boone attempts to sober up before delivering a baby in 'Stagecoach'.

But in reality *Stagecoach* was Bing's last significant brush with Hollywood. Ironically enough, Bing's example of an in demand leading man, Cary Grant, had just completed his last film, *Walk Don't Run* (1966). Not that Bing wasn't in demand. Well over a dozen films were linked to his name between 1966 and his death. Possibly the one that would have extended his career was from his old studio Paramount. They wanted him for the role eventually taken by Lee Marvin in *Paint Your Wagon* (1968). We have a chance to see what Bing would have made of the part when he starred in a television special promoting the film at the time of its release. Then in 1973 he teamed with Bob Hope in making a bid for the screen rights to Neil Simon's comedy *The Sunshine Boys*. When that reached the screen two years later it starred Walter Matthau and George Burns. That twosome performed as though they were born into the roles so perhaps it's as well that M-G-M went with two veteran actors other than Crosby and Hope. The other acting opportunities that came up wanted Bing for one of three reasons: his name value, a patently unsuitable role or to agree to another Road film alongside Hope. 'Fishing, hunting and so on" seemed wise alternatives.

It was all change time in the movies. The studio system was more or less dead and gone at the start of the sixties. By the middle of the decade the production line feature that had stood Bing in good stead for twenty years was also a thing of the past. Several of Bing's

entertainment industry contemporaries were remaining in the limelight by crossing over into politics, which many Americans regard as another branch of show business anyway. According to the November 6th, 1967 issue of "Newsweek", Bing was a "freshly registered Republican". Earlier that year he had been approached by nearby neighbour Shirley Temple to join her finance committee. He agreed and hosted a hundred dollar a plate dinner for her in San Francisco. Bing was more newsworthy then Shirley and the press coverage of 'A party with Shirley Temple' regarded it as an entertainment rather than political event. A joking Bing knew it was a time of change when he told his audience:

"On the way in a guy asked me 'Why don't you do what Ronald Reagan and George Murphy and Shirley Temple are doing?' I said, 'You mean get into politics?' and the guy said, 'No, get out of show business. ' "

Keith Parkinson

THE A-Z OF BING'S MOVIES

KAHN, GUS (1886-1941) Lyricist. Kahn was another songwriter who died at a relatively early age, like Irving Kahal who ended the previous "A to Z" entries. Thirty years separated the two Kahn songs which Bing contributed to films, neither of which he recorded for commercial issue. The first was for the Sennett short *Sing, Bing, Sing* (1932) when he sang "Loveable". (In 1928 Bing cut another song of the same name with the Whiteman Orchestra where the lyric writers were Ralph Holmes and Seymour Simons.) Then in 1960 Bing was joined by Nicole Maurey and chorus on "You tell me your dream" for *High Time*. Kahn's life was the subject of the 1952 biopic *I'll See You In My Dreams* when Danny Thomas portrayed the lyricist. That film featured all of Kahn's big hits, including "Ain't we got fun", "It had to be you", "Makin' whoopee" and "Yes sir that's my baby".

KALMAR, BERT (1884-1947) Lyricist and screenwriter. "Three little words", sung by the Rhythm Boys for their guest shot in *Check and Double Check* (1930), was Bing's only film song from the pen of the prolific Kalmar. His name is forever linked with lifetime partner Harry Ruby and Hollywood legends The Marx Brothers. Not only did the team write many of Groucho's on screen ditties, they also had a hand in the screenplays for the brothers' *Horsefeathers* (1932) and *Duck Soup* (1933). Kalmar was honoured with a Hollywood biopic, when Fred Astaire played him in *Three Little Words* (1950).

KALMUS, NATALIE (1892-?) Technicolor consultant. At least that's the credit she received on four of Bing's movies. They were *Dixie* (1943), *Blue Skies* (1946), *The Emperor Waltz* (1947) and *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthurs's Court* (1949). It was a con really because all that happened was that she collected a cheque from Paramount and the other film studios which used the Technicolor process. Her husband was Dr. Herbert T. Kalmus, who invented the film colour process first used in 1917. A two colour process was used until 1936 when Technicolor as we know it today was introduced. Clever Natalie insisted on being credited as "color consultant" on all Technicolor films from 1933 until the Kalmus patent expired in 1949.

KANIN, GARSON (1912-) Director, screenwriter, playwright, novelist. It was his play "The live wire" which formed the basis of *High Time* (1960). When Kanin's total output is considered, his contribution to the Crosby film catalogue is almost a lesser effort. He directed over a dozen pictures including *Bachelor Mother* (1939) and *Tom, Dick and Harry* (1941). His stage plays included "Born Yesterday " and "The Rat Race". His screenplays covered such hits as *A Double Life* (1948), Adam's Rib (1949) and *It Should Happen to You* (1954). And he provided the story for the only good rock 'n' roll movie ever made - *The Girl Can't Help It* (1956). His later years have been spent writing memoirs of his Hollywood days, such as "Tracy and Hepburn".

KANTER, HAL (1918-) Screenwriter and director. He worked in the former capacity for his contribution to a Crosby picture when he, was one of three writers employed on *Road to Bali* (1953). He was only just getting into his stride at that time, having proved his worth to Paramount by contributing dialogue to the Bob Hope starrer *My Favourite Spy* (1951). Hal Wallis entrusted him to direct the Elvis Presley Paramount release *Loving You* (1957) and he went on to prove himself adept at directing light comedy with some fondly remembered fluff like *Bachelor in Paradise* (1961), *Pocketful of Miracles* (1961), *Move Over Darling* (1963) and *Dear Brigitte* (1965). Television claimed him as a producer in the seventies.

KATRINA Song. It featured in the Ichabod sequence of the Disney full length cartoon *The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad* (1949). The lady in question was wooed by Ichabod. Don Raye and Gene de Paul wrote the lilting song that rival suitor Brom Bones used to win her over. Record buyers could choose from a full length version Bing recorded in 1947 or an abbreviated version which was part of the four 78 sides recorded in 1949 to tie in with the release of the Disney film.

KAYE, DANNY (1913-1987) Actor/singer. Kaye's only big screen appearance with Bing was in the 1954 box-office hit *White Christmas*. He was Private Phil Davis to Bing's Captain Bob Wallace. Kaye bagged the part when first Fred Astaire and then Donald O'Connor became unavailable. Kaye was right for the part both in his lightweight acting technique and his ability to join Bing for a few Irving Berlin compositions. If you care to trace his career, it has more than its fair share of ups and downs. He was in some unfunny two-reel comedies in the 1930s. Then Kaye's success on Broadway resulted in Sam Goldwyn signing him for some very popular films. *Up in Arms* (1944), *Wonder Man* (1945), *The Kid from Brooklyn* (1946), *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty* (1947) and *A Song is Born* (1948) gave him an unbroken five year run of popular family comedies. The 1948/49 career highlights were undoubtedly the appearances at the London Palladium. In the 1950s the films were not consistently good. The best from that decade was *The*

Bing and Danny Kaye swap stories on the set.

Court Jester (1956), the most popular *Hans Christian Andersen* (1952), the most, disappointing *The Five Pennies* (1959) and the worst *Me and the Colonel* (1958). Kaye's recordings seemed to the fall into two categories. Some, such as "I wonder whose kissing her now', were pleasant vocals that stood up to several plays. Others, like "Dinah" are irritating after a couple of listens. Where he pitched his talents at the kiddie market with such as "Tubby the tuba" he was guaranteed regular BBC Light programme airtime. At the moment his singing seems to be just plain unfashionable so maybe his day is yet to come. Kaye's recording career became more or less non-existent from the 1960s onwards. That was when he concentrated on work on behalf of UNICEF, hour long television variety shows on U. S. television and a return to Broadway. By 1970 he'd made his last film, *The Madwoman of Chaillot* (1969). It was not a success. He was also gaining a reputation for being difficult. In the Broadway musical "Two by Two" his co-stars complained that he was unpredictable and that no two of his performances were alike. He tended to leave the plot behind and do his own thing. In fairness this did not harm ticket sales. The punters were just as happy to see Kaye entertain as to follow the plot of the show. Kaye died following bypass heart surgery. He was almost a superstar. His careers on record, film, television and stage and his humanitarian work were just a little too diverse to put him right at the top of the entertainment tree.

KEITH, ROBERT (1898-1966) Actor. His solitary Bing picture was *Here Comes the Groom* (1951) in which he played Bing's buddy George Degnan, who was also the editor of the newspaper for which the Bing character was a foreign correspondent. He'd been in films since the silent days, making his debut in *The Other Kind of Love* (1924). There's a gap of almost twenty years in his film appearances because he swapped to writing dialogue for Universal and Columbia. After his appearance in *Here Comes the Groom* he had fairly major character roles in *Battle Circus* (1953), *Young at Heart* (1955), and *Guys and Dolls* (1955) through to his final big screen appearance in *Posse from Hell* (1961). He was the father of the actor Brian Keith.

Robert Keith watches Bing teach Alexis Smith how to wrestle in 'Here Comes the Groom'.

KELLAWAY, CECIL (1893-1972) Actor. Seen on screen briefly with Bing in *Birth of the Blues* (1941), Kellaway was also in *Star Spangled Rhythm* (1942) and *Variety Girl* (1947), where he played himself in both of these "all star cast" Paramount pictures. He arrived in Hollywood from Australia in the late 1930s. He was already a well known actor down under but opportunities for furthering his career in films were limited, which is why he travelled to the States. It was a sound business decision because he went on to make well over a hundred films there. Two stood out sufficiently to justify Oscar nominations: *The Luck of the Irish* (1948) and *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* (1968). In both he played loveable, twinkly-eyed character parts. Audiences could never accept him as a villain.

KELLY, GENE (1912-1996) Actor, dancer, choreographer, director and singer of sorts. The multi-talented entertainer just about qualifies for an entry in this A to Z. He was with Bing in *Let's Make Love* (1960) when he gave dancing lessons to Yves Montand. (Bing gave Montand singing lessons). Fourteen years on he was one of the narrators in *That's Entertainment* together with Bing and nine other well known Hollywood names. Kelly entered films in 1942 with *For me and my Gal* and exited some 43 years later in the compilation *That's Dancing.* In the intervening years he charmed cinemagoers in just about every film in which he appeared. A writer in the "New Yorker" magazine summed him up with the line, 'His grin could melt stone". Alongside Al Jolson's Jazz Singer clip where he sings "Toot, toot, Tootsie", the most widely seen film musical excerpt is Kelly singing and dancing the title song from *Singin' in the Rain* (1952).

BING ON THE OLD GOLD AND COCOANUT GROVE BROADCASTS

Fellow ICC member Virgil Edwards of Eugene, Oregon will be 87 years young this year, and he continues to be an enthusiastic collector of Bing's records and videos. Virg and I have become very good friends over the past few years, and he has provided invaluable support to the JONZO compact disc series of Bing's commercial recordings being produced by John McNicholas. For example, when JZCD-19 is issued in the near future, it will include an alternate take of the 12-inch Blue Label Decca "PENNIES FROM HEAVEN MEDLEY" by Bing, Frances Langford and Louis Armstrong taken from Virg's collection that was not previously known to have ever been released commercially.

But to me, Virg's biggest claim to fame is his still vivid memories of listening to Bing on the radio back in 1929 and 1930 before he became famous, including Paul Whiteman's Old Gold programs and the legendary Gus Arnheim broadcasts from the Cocoanut Grove that could be heard only on the West Coast in the states of California, Oregon and Washington.

When I learned of Virg's great good fortune to have heard these historic broadcasts, I encouraged him to write about them for BING, so that we could all share his personal recollections of a very young Bing on radio before he became a national star. I know that everyone will find Virg's unique memories of those bygone days just as fascinating as I did, and I would like to thank him most sincerely for sharing them with us.

F.B. (Wig) Wiggins

MEMORIES OF BING CROSBY

My purpose for writing is to share a few of my memories of the late Bing Crosby, whom I have admired and been a fan of for the past seventy years. Because of my age and dimming memory, a lot of the past has faded away.

In the Winter of 1928 and 1929, I was a 16-year old junior in high school, living with my widowed mother and unmarried brother in a small town in the south-west corner of the state of Washington. At that time in my life, I was a fan of many of the popular entertainers and dance orchestras of that era, my favorite being Paul Whiteman and his orchestra. In our rather isolated area, the main source for music was from radio. We didn't own a record player and about the only daytime radio reception came from radio stations in Portland, Oregon, a distance of 65 miles. However, we received excellent night-time reception from Seattle, Washington, San Francisco and Los Angeles, California.

My admiration of Paul Whiteman and his orchestra was based mostly on information I gleaned from newspaper and magazine articles. He was head and shoulders above other orchestras in popularity in the 1920s. I had heard some of his records over a local radio station, but have absolutely no memory of reading of or hearing Bing Crosby and The Rhythm Boys. Imagine my delight when I read that Paul Whiteman and his orchestra would be featured in an hour-long coast-to-coast radio broadcast for Old Gold cigarettes in February 1929. I can recall how excited I was on the day of the broadcast that was scheduled for 6:00 p.m. Pacific Coast time, and wanted to be home from school and finish with dinner and be ready for the program.

I wish I could say that I remember the songs that Bing sang on that first Old Gold program, but I do clearly recall how taken I was with the quality and timbre of his voice, having never heard anyone sing like that before. 1 can truly say that I became an instant Crosby fan. Vocalists with the dance bands of the 1920's usually played an instrument and generally were not very good singers, but Bing was different.

The Old Gold programs continued weekly for many months from various cities and venues. The best I can remember is that Bing would sing two or three solos and the Rhythm Boys would sing about the same number of songs on each broadcast. The song titles I can recall that Bing sang most often were "I'll Get By", "Oh, Miss Hannah" and "Louise". They became favorites of mine and remain so today.

I'm probably one of a select circle of Crosby collectors that thoroughly enjoy Bing's early recordings from his Paul Whiteman years. Because of this, I am especially appreciative of John McNicholas' JONZO series of compact discs.

During the Summer of 1929, I obtained employment in the timber industry and persuaded my brother to go in partnership with me and purchased a

radio-phonograph combination. I was able to buy my first recordings. The very first record I bought was by Vic Meyers and his Butler Hotel Orchestra of Seattle, Washington, "Nobody's Sweetheart Now" on Columbia 1530-D. My first Paul Whiteman record was "Oh, Miss Hannah" with a vocal by Bing. However, my first record collection was doomed from the start. My brother married in May 1931 and my mother and I had to move out and get settled in another house. My records were left at my brother's home. A few months later, I asked my brother for my records and he said his wife had given them to her relatives. Needless to say, I was quite put out.

Because of the Great Depression, my marriage in February 1934, and the expense of setting up housekeeping, I was unable to buy a record player until 1935. By then, Bing was recording for Decca and I started anew with the old Blue label records, at three for a dollar.

I mentioned previously that we received good radio reception at night from Seattle, San Francisco and Los Angeles. The big hotels in those cities all had ballrooms and fine dance bands playing for dancing most every night. The local stations in those cities would broadcast live music from their venues. During the years of 1928-1930, I would often tune in the live broadcasts coming from these cities.

I can remember a few of the orchestras: from Seattle, the Butler Hotel, Vic Meyers and his orchestra; from San Francisco, the Mark Hopkins Hotel, Anson Weeks and his orchestra; and the Sir Frances Hotel, the Laughner-Harris Orchestra, Harris being Phil Harris, Bing's old pal. From Los Angeles, the Biltmore Hotel, Don Clark and his orchestra; from the Ambassador Hotel and the Cocoanut Grove, the orchestra that was playing there prior to Gus Arnheim was Johnny Hamp and his Kentucky Serenaders.

Following the ending of the Old Gold programs and completion of the film "King of Jazz," I was unaware of Bing's activities. I assumed he was still a member of the Whiteman organization. I must tell you it was a most pleasant surprise to tune into KNX Hollywood and hear Gus Arnheim and his orchestra and the Rhythm Boys. It is unclear to me exactly when I first heard the broadcast, I would guess sometime in the later part of the summer of 1930. On the back cover of Gary Hamann's book 'Bing Crosby in the 30s', there is a photocopy of an advertisement that states that Gus Arnheim is returning to the Cocoanut Grove and listed other entertainers, including the Rhythm Boys. The opening night was Tuesday, July 15, 1930.

The programs were broadcast by KNX Hollywood every Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 p.m. to 12:00 p.m. The broadcasts came on with the orchestra playing "Sweet and Lovely" which was Gus Arnheim's theme song. There was an announcer who would say, "You are listening to Gus Arnheim and his world-famous Cocoanut Grove Orchestra, coming to you from the Ambassador Hotel in downtown Los Angeles." I have no memory of the identity of the announcer.

To me, the programs had a fun-loving and informal atmosphere and a great deal of spontaneity. Bing ad-libbed quite often during his vocals and he, Harry Barris, and Al Rinker clowned around a lot and kidded Loyce Whiteman when she sang. All of the broadcasts that I listened to (and I listened to many) were live performances with no commercials. You could hear the murmur of voices, applause, and at times, raucous laughter. I had the feeling that Bing, Harry and Al were imbibing a bit, along with some of their cronies, whose table must have been close to the bandstand. The music was uninterrupted except for an intermission.

Bing sang most of the vocals, performed with the Rhythm Boys and sang duets with Loyce Whiteman. Loyce also vocalized. There was a great deal of repetition with some of the most popular songs being played two or three times a night, especially "I Surrender Dear," "It Must Be True" and "If I Could Be With You." Bing did a lot of jazz and scat-singing like "Dinah," "Sweet Georgia Brown" and "One More Time." This genre became a favorite of mine and remains so to this day. It influenced my love for Dixieland Jazz. One of my most favorite songs that Bing sang was "Lies." It never became a hit, and I was sorry he never recorded it.

It was not too unusual for Bing to miss an evening performance. I recall the keen sense of disappointment I would have because of his absence. When Bing was not present, Harry Barris would sing some of the vocals, but he was a poor substitute for Bing. I cannot recall that Russ Columbo sang any vocals. Russ performed with a trio that sang occasionally. As Bing's popularity soared, so did the rumors of womanizing and drinking as reasons for missing performances.

It was my understanding that Gus Arnheim and his orchestra also had a 30-minute program aired twice a week in the early evening from a studio and sponsored by MJB Coffee. I never heard it and don't know if Bing appeared on it.

I cannot remember how I discovered that Bing and the Rhythm Boys had walked out of the Cocoanut Grove. I know I listened to the radio broadcasts through the Winter of 1930-1931. Bing was so popular on the West Coast that many of his activities were noted in our local newspapers.

When Bing walked out of the Cocoanut Grove, it did not end my idolizing of him. I cannot recall hearing his first live broadcast in September 1931, but I listened to his "Cremo Singer" programs and Woodbury shows. The radio was playing his Brunswick recordings and I just could not get enough of him.

I would have given anything to have been able to afford a record player; although I had a steady job, we were in the midst of The Great Depression. Wages and hours had both been slashed. A year after my marriage in 1934, I was able to afford a record player and start my record collection.

The Kraft Music Hall, starting in 1935, was an absolute must for me until entering the service in November 1942 where I served for over 3 years. In the fall of 1944, I was stationed in Leek, England. I was given a three-day pass to London. After settling in my hotel, I headed for Harrod's Department Store to look for Bing's recordings. Imagine my surprise and delight when 1 arrived in the music department, and suspended from the ceiling was a life-size papier-maché of Bing Crosby! I thought, "I have surely come to the right place," and indeed I had, as the clerk brought out 24 English

Columbia and one Parlophone records of Bing's. I purchased them all, took them back to camp, boxed them and sent them home to my wife They all arrived safely, and today are among my most prized recordings in my collection.

During my overseas duty, I heard Bing on the Armed Forces Radio Programs. I was privileged to hear many great entertainers, including Bob Hope twice and the Glenn Miller Orchestra twice. In the summer of 1945, I was in Nice, France on R & R and Glenn Miller's Orchestra was playing at the hotel I was lodged in. It was announced during an intermission that the orchestra was playing its last concert and was flying to the USA the next day and would be disbanded.

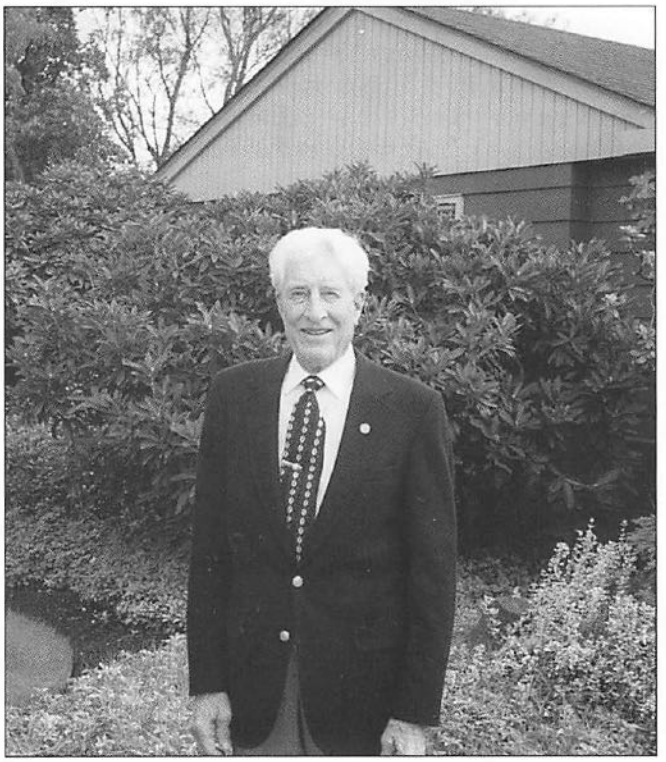
I was discharged from the Army in April 1946 and resumed civilian life. I continued collecting Bing's records and listening to his Philco, Chesterfield and General Electric shows. I believe I've heard portions of all of Bing's major radio programs except the Ford and the Crosby-Clooney shows, which I believe were all daytime shows. I was a busy working man, but I do have a lot of both programs on cassettes.

I enjoyed the pleasure of hearing Bing Crosby one time in person. This occurred in September 1948 at Portland, Oregon. Bing, Bob Hope, Marilyn Maxwell and John Scott Trotter and his orchestra performed in what was then called Multnomah Stadium. The stadium was a facility for playing major college football games and seated 25-30,000 people. They had created a stage in the middle of the football field, so sitting up in the grandstand, you got a far away view of the performers - Bing and Bob were at their best with their usual banter. I can only remember one song that Bing sang. It was a popular ballad of the day by the name of "There's a Tree in the Meadow." He must have liked the song real well because after his solo, he would hum or sing a few bars of the song. He did this several times and I was always surprised that he never recorded the song.

I also became a rabid fan of Bing's movies and tried to attend the ones that appeared in our local area and started with "King of Jazz." I am especially fond of Bing's "Going Hollywood." It had its premier at the Paramount Theater in Portland, Oregon on December 23, 1933. I was dating my future wife at the time. Bing sang several romantic love songs in the picture that I somehow associated with my own romance. Whenever I hear Bing sing "Our Big Love Scene," it will always remind me of my late wife. We were married in February 1934 and had a happy marriage of 60 years and 10 months when she passed away in December 1994.

In 1952, we moved to Eugene, Oregon, 110 miles south of Portland, and the home of the University of Oregon. The University has a fine library with a special collection department. I have arranged with the library to take my Bing Crosby collection on my demise. Ample funds will be provided so the collection can be properly catalogued and made available for School of Music students, professors and others. I have a nice collection of records, tapes, videos, books, fan magazines, etc. I have several recordings from Bing's personal collection that I was the high bidder on from the auction by Butterfield's of San Francisco, California held on May 28, 1982. I bid $350.00 on Bing's first record, but it sold for $425.00 to the Star Magazine. They were successful bidders on several memorabilia of Bing's. They later held a contest and gave it all to the winner.

The University of Oregon Library has in its Special Collection Department the papers of the late, legendary Red Nichols given to them by his wife. In 1986, Stan Hester, co-author of the biography of Red Nichols, wrote me and said he was working on a discography of Red Nichols and would I go to the library and do a bit of research for him, which I was very glad to do. I did a little work for him for a period of three years. I, was glad to note in BING #119 that the book is now in print. 1 think it is most appropriate that two old friends, Bing and Red, will be together again at the University of Oregon.



Virgil Edwards, taken on his 85th birthday in 1997.

I close in saying that to me the most nostalgic period of Bing's career is the several months he spent at the Cocoanut Grove, the subsequent program, "The Cremo Singer" and his Brunswick recordings that the radio stations started giving a lot of time to. My regret is that a home recorder was not available for me to record some of the great two-hour programs from the Cocoanut Grove so that some of the younger fans could hear them.

I am enjoying listening to Bing these days and am the proud owner of John McNicholas' magnificent Jonzo series. I hope John can continue the project and I can live long enough to enjoy them all.

Virgil E. Edwards
2180 Roland Way
Eugene, OR 97401
541-343-1917
April 1, 1999

One Sweet Letter From You

Members' views, opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters received since the last issue

Maggie Ryan, 35 Northfield, Bridgwater, Somersrt TA6 7HA

Having talked to our Editor at length regarding the blow by blow American TV expose of Bing Crosby, I don't want to dwell on the anger I showed except to apologise for doing so.

I ask the question. Why is our magazine descending to dishing the dirt? Bad enough that the US media feel it necessary to deride a man, who in my opinion was a great ambassador for his country - but we had to put our stamp on it by printing the text. Wig's brief column on the subject was concise and therefore enough.

As you know, I promote Bing on British radio stations and I feel a big thanks to the radio presenters for supporting Bing is far more important. The title of E Entertainment's programme 'Mysteries and Scandals' should have given the game away. A few members have said "I suppose we have to see both sides of Bing" - maybe they do, I don't, I enjoy him for the wonderful entertainer he was, his private life belongs to him, not me.

I enclose a tape of Alistair Cooke, recorded in December 1977. I suggest the text of this should be published to counteract the last sad episode.

Keith Parkinson, Meadowcroft, Houghtons Lane, Eccleston, St Helens WA10 5LD

..... and all for £8 a year! The value for money membership of the ICC is superb. The print quality of the magazine is only matched by the scholarly articles. I'm thinking in particular of Wayne Martin's V-disc listing and Lionel's excellent analysis of the recordings contained on the recent 4 CD issue.

Bert Bishop is seeking feedback on his Bing on the Box articles as far as summarising airplays is concerned. The section about what's been played during the last few months as described in the current issue is about right although I would still welcome the coverage given to the likes of the interviews with Mary-Elizabeth Adams and Carolyn Mchaels. The people who knew Bing personally continue to build up a rounded picture of the man. I'm more interested in Bing's recordings and acting than his private life but the first hand insights relatives and colleagues have to offer are well worth hearing or reading when they are as objective as those in the current magazine. Phillip's views of life with father as reported by Roger Osterholm put a lot of things into perspective even though television and the press are not much concerned with the truth because "it's not what our readers/viewers want".

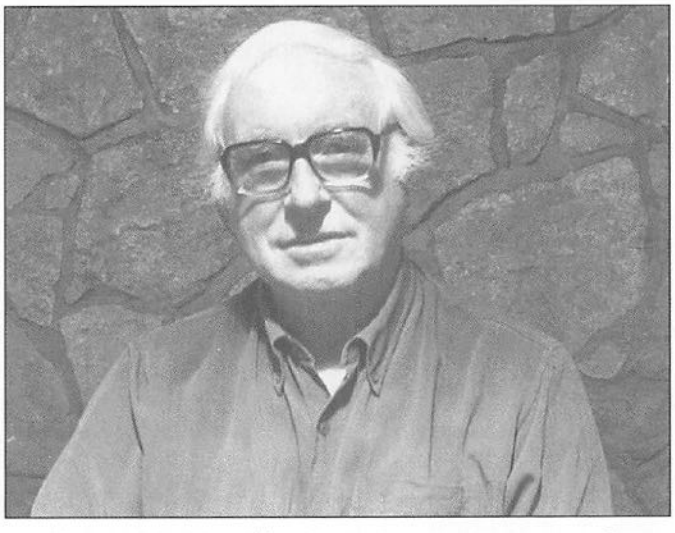
Looking again at issue 121, I believe it's the finest issue the ICC has produced. Well done.

Stan White, 57 Stanley St., Rothwell, Northamptonshire NN14 6EA

The pleasure of seeing such a well produced Spring 1999 edition of BING was spoilt for me by the main feature all about the American TV programme, dealing with Bing's dark and troubled life in the "Mysteries and Scandals" series. In my opinion Wig Wiggins summed up the whole programme in a nutshell in his column, and that should have served to cover the subject.

Bing Crosby's V-Discs are given a thorough going over, with much previously unpublished information and several people put in a lot of work to produce the feature. The recent 4-CD "V" Disc set apparently contains some material which never appeared on the "V" Discs, but it has to be said that some of the alternate recordings used, in fact, all of them, do provide us with some great Bing tracks which most ICC members and certainly the general public would have difficulty in finding elsewhere, so if you can obtain the set it is a worthwhile buy. You will certainly need the Wayne Martin, Crosby "V" Discography, and Lionel's article, if you need to have track details.

Keith Parkinson in his always excellent, Celluloid Crosby, struck a rich vein in looking at subject matter which does not normally now, or in the past qualify for showing in a cinema, it is good to have the material brought together in such an interesting article.



"Stan of Rothwell" as he is known to many radio presenters.

Regarding Bert Bishop having to cut down on his coverage of what has been broadcast by the many radio presenters, I would like to point out that the variety of songs they have available is because of the efforts of people like Maggie Ryan, Leslie Gaylor and Ernest Sutkowski, I also do a bit! Without this help, the Crosby repertoire on radio would be very limited, this is because the local gram libraries in both BBC and commercial

Stations, do not stock much that falls outside of modern 'pop'. For BBC programmes to obtain tracks from the main BBC Gramophone Library, costs over £10 per track. Naturally, programme producers and presenters try to find the tracks elsewhere. It works, and through the good offices of Ernest, many fine Bing CDs are made available for radio use here and in America. There cannot be a radio station in New Jersey which does not benefit from the help willingly given by Ernest.

The Bing Crosby Information File produced by Jim Reilly for the ICC, is attracting favourable comments from the radio presenters, who are finding the information most useful.

Going back to the 'Mysteries and Scandals', all these horror stories about Bing are blown-up out of all proportion. You don't have to believe it, I don't.

Margaret Otway, 14 Barnsley Avenue, Conisbrough, Doncaster DN12 3LB

I have received the latest edition of BING and as always it is a masterpiece and a credit to the ICC. Those of us like myself who make very little contribution will be forever grateful to those of you who make regular contributions like Lionel, Leslie, Jim, Michael, yourself and many others for producing a magazine of such high quality. 1 hope the new colour covers which have been part of recent editions are here to stay as they make the magazine stand out and are an added bonus to the outstanding material which we all know is inside. Your efforts are appreciated more than you'll ever know. WELL DONE to all concerned.

Barry Whittingham, El Rancho Grande, 25c Garton, Close, Cinderhill, Nottingham NG6 8RZ

Just a short letter to let you know that I am not very happy with the way you have portrayed Bing in the Spring issue of the magazine. When I visited Wig in Jan / Feb of this year he showed me the video of that programme and it was obvious to me that the interviewees were filmed for more than the few minutes of talking shown. It was OK for Wig to report that the programme had been 'aired' on a minor TV channel, as we are all broad minded enough to see some mention of Bing on the box. But you went too far when you went into the more detailed remarks, especially 4 pages of it! Several members have telephoned me to express their dismay at seeing this in the mag. What we want to see within the pages of BING is news of Bing the Entertainer not some rubbish imported from the USA!!!

Otherwise the magazine cover is the best yet! And the rest of the contents are excellent, mind you, I am waiting for a replacement as I have two blank pages; due to the cover being thicker than usual. I was talking to Michael O'Toole on the 'phone last week and he said it's down to collation in the printing press, and the thicker cover caused the two pages to be missed.

(Editor: As you can see some diverse opinions on the last issue although I have to say there were very many complimentary letters and only three which took me to task for the coverage of the 'Mysteries and Scandals' programme we reviewed.

As you know, Roger Osterholm took part in the programme and I asked him to write an article for us regarding his participation. At that stage, I thought that the programme was to be shown at a much later date and I planned to review it at that time. In the event, the show came out just before Christmas and I noticed quite a number of comments about it on the Internet. I felt therefore that it would be appropriate if Roger Osterholm described it for us and I had in mind the many UK members - including myself - who would not have seen it. Roger kindly produced an article for me and I sent a copy to Wig so that he could tailor his remarks to avoid repetition with Roger's article. Wig advised me that the programme was a miserable little show and that he felt that we should not give it much coverage. I pondered on his remarks and duly edited Roger's article down somewhat but I continued to take the view that all of us who had not seen the programme ought to know more about its content.

Bing Crosby was a human being, not a Saint, and in order to defend him we need to know what is being said about him so that we can rebut it. The more I learn about Bing's life, the more I realise that he was a fundamentally good man who thought deeply about the problems of the world and tried to play his part in making it a better place to live. He has nothing to be ashamed of! A certain shyness at times created an impression of coldness whilst his sincere and thoughtful attempts to bring his children up properly have been distorted and exaggerated by the values of a different generation. As Crosby followers, it is incumbent on us to ensure that the truth is told about Bing and if that means occasionally being aware of the fabrications being issued about him, so be it. We should all look silly if people repeated some of the rubbish spoken about Bing and we did not know what they were talking about.

Knowledge is power and I make no apology for reviewing the 'Mysteries and Scandals' programme in a little more depth. With hindsight, perhaps I could have cut down Roger's article by another half page but that is not an easy thing to do without spoiling the flow. However, the Editor must deliver what the readers want and if there is a widespread feeling that my judgment was wrong on this occasion, I'll accept it and mend my ways in future. I do need members views if I am to deliver what you all want, so don't be afraid to let me have your comments.

By the way, I've seen the 'Mysteries and Scandals' show myself now. It is indeed a pathetic attempt to fill a half hour slot on TV and thank goodness Phillip Crosby took part and told the truth about his Dad.

Maggie Ryan has suggested that I print the text of an October 1977 'Letter from America' BBC radio programme to counteract the negative sentiments of the 'Mysteries' show. This was in fact covered in depth in BING #53 in March 1979 but nevertheless it was interesting and I am therefore reproducing it further on in this issue.

Finally, picking up Stan's and Maggie's comments about Bert's coverage of the local radio presenters, I am only too aware how much work is done by Ernest Sutkowski, Stan, Maggie Ryan and Leslie Gaylor to ensure that Bing is played on local

radio. However I have been receiving comments that perhaps the coverage was too much bearing in mind that we have over 300 members in the USA . The challenge I gave Bert therefore was to ensure that the radio presenters were appropriately recognised but not to go into so much detail. I thought Bert did a good job in the last issue as does Keith Parkinson. But again, if you want more coverage of the local radio broadcasts, write and tell me and to quote Captain Pickard, I'll make it so.)

Vernon Wesley Taylor, 4520 S.E. 73rd. Ave. Oregon 97206, USA

Lately I seem to be dealing overmuch in quibbles and quiddities; must be the wet weather this late spring. First, however, I wish to tell you how very fine the latest issue (#121) of BING is and how thoroughly I have enjoyed reading it. Every section, each article and photograph, and especially those bright eye-popping covers: Truly delightful. It would he a joy to comment on everything but shall spare you this time. Still, I do have that quibble, even though. probably, most Bing fans and collectors hold a common view on how Bing and Dixie met.

Roger Osterholm in his splendid, detailed piece on the production of that "Mysteries & Scandals" broadcast reported that he said that Bing and Dixie met at the Cocoanut Grove. However we have Bing's word that they actually met while he was working at the Montmartre Cafe "and Barris, Rinker and I were fairly big there... I'm glad it happened to me then because it brought Dixie Lee to the Montmartre".

The old cafe was opened in 1923 at 6757 Hollywood Blvd. near Highland Avenue. It was on the second floor of a building still standing, though it is worn and creaky today. It is within a block of the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel, newly refurbished and thriving on multitudes of eager tourists.

I could hatch more little quiddities ("Bing is buried nine feet deep in case Kathryn wishes to be buried with him."..."Bela Lugosi, in his original Dracula cape is buried on Bing's left"...) but perhaps I've already said more than BING Magazine wants to hear, and I shall drop it.

Again, and more seriously, 1 want to say that #121 is a triumph of the form.

Robert C. Achorn, 41 Johnson Rd., Sutton, Massachusetts 01590, USA

The A-Z biography of Arthur Johnston (BING 121) was outstanding. If I may add a couple of thoughts:

-- Johnston learned the art of songwriting at the shoulder of the American Master, Irving Berlin. For the decade of the 1920s, Johnston was Berlin's musical secretary and transcriber. He was the first person to transfer to paper the musical notes for many Berlin hits that Bing sang later. "Always" is a classic example. It was originally "Mona," written by Berlin to salute one of Johnston's girl friends. Johnston dug out the old melody, Berlin changed the words, and the result was a major hit.

-- Johnston made his solo Hollywood debut as music arranger for a "silent" film, Chaplin's "City Lights."

-- Arthur Johnston and Sam Coslow should be credited with one additional Crosby song, "Crooner's Lullaby," sung by Bing on the soundtrack of Paramount's "Millions in the Air" (1935.)

-- After "Double or Nothing" at Paramount, Johnston was credited with music for the 20th Century-Fox film, "While New York Sleeps." He also composed music in the late '30s for two British films, "Sailing Along" with Jessie Matthews and "The Sidewalks of London" with Charles Laughton. Johnston and Coslow were credited with the title song for Walt Disney's 1946 film, "Song of the South" but presumably they wrote it a decade or more earlier.

Greg Van Beek, 3006 Emerald St., West Bend, WI 53095, USA

Just wanted to enclose two more photos I found from the 1976 Bob Hope Olympic Special rehearsal. These appear to have been taken in Bing's dressing room, as you can see his 'Canadian Mounty' hat sitting on a shelf in the background that was used in the sketch. I have no idea who the young lady is with Bing, she is wearing a backstage pass, so may have just been someone involved with the crew or one of their friends.

BING 121 was really a fine issue, Malcolm. I can't understand how you manage to top yourself with each new tome, but alas, you've done it again. Bravo!

Ray Forster, 5 Lingfield Grove, Liverpool L14 3LG

....Amongst the plaudits for the new magazine production, there is one feature which has not been mentioned and may interest you.

My ability to read is now restricted to the use of an 'Easy Reader' - and was there ever such a misnomer - kindly donated by the Liverpool Voluntary Service for the Blind. This device consists of a lens placed on the writing which produces on a TV screen from a newsprint size letter, an image two inches high. This degree of magnification of course means that a nine letter word spreads right across the screen, so it's a laborious business of reading word by word, then whizzing back to the beginning of the next line. Laborious - but it does the

trick. Not much good though in Sainsburys trying to pick out the bramble jelly from all those other jars of jam, nor in HMV searching for the new CDs.

But to get to the point. The size, contrast and sharpness of the print in BING magazines is displayed on this gadget better than any other print I have tried. If only the lettering on CDs was as clear.

(Editor: What a nice compliment for us - thanks Ray. Ray has been a member of the Club since 1950 and I am pleased that he continues to get pleasure from the magazine.)

John Sawbridge, 36 Brighton Rd., Leicester LE5 0HA

When I read in the obituary section of BING #121 the reference to the passing of dear Marion Ryan, I thought that I would like to tell my story of my appearance with her in February 1960.

I was a contestant in a show called 'Spot the Tune' in the early days of commercial television in the UK. The show featured Jackie Rae and Marion Ryan. She was charming and bubbly when she came to our dressing room before the show began.

I recall that I was the last of four contestants. Marion greeted me, asked me to pick out a letter of the alphabet from a basket which she held high. I picked out the letter 'P' and Marion asked me to sing a song beginning with that letter. Being a Bing fan, I sang 'Please'. The compere Jackie Rae asked me about the entertaining which I did, telling me that "every entertainer should have a gimmick", whereupon I gave my impression of the Mills Brothers with the song 'Sweet Sue'. Everything went well for me.

The orchestra then played a medley of tunes for me to name the titles, including to my delight the song 'Please'. Then came the commercial break, during which we four contestants were given a sheet of paper with tune titles. Our task was to write down the first line of each song. I can recall two of them 'Whoopee' and 'Can't Help Loving That Man of Mine'. I was successful with all four which meant that I would go through for the Jackpot which stood at £100. Motor cars were not on offer in those days.

To win the jackpot prize, I had to name a song after hearing only the bridge release. I have never heard one so simple. It was 'Little Sir Echo'. Jackie Rae presented me with the cheque for £100. He asked if I would mind telling what I had planned to do with the money. I replied that I had a TV set which would only receive the BBC channel, not the commercial channel on which I was appearing. Marion Ryan screamed "Now he tells us!". The studio was in an uproar. The producer of the show shook my hand and told me that mentioning the opposition was not normally allowed. However I had made the show a memorable one.

(Editor: I always used to enjoy 'Spot The Tune' and thanks John for bringing back some nice memories of Marion Ryan and the show.)

LETTER FROM AMERICA

As suggested by Maggie Ryan we are reproducing Alistair Cooke's tribute to Bing which was first broadcast on BBC radio after Bing's death in 1977. The first half of the programme concerned the recent death of Groucho Marx and then continued as follows:-

The other great man was a world apart from Groucho in geography, upbringing, temperament and talent. I'm talking about Harry Lillis Crosby who for reasons as obscure and debatable as the origins of the word 'jazz' was known from boyhood as Bing.

Some years ago, a friend of mine in San Francisco, a publisher (we were all three members of' the San Francisco Golf Club), thought of persuading Bing to sit down in several sessions with a tape recorder and put out a book of reminiscences. My friend was very steamed up about this project and he came to me one day and said "I've got the main thing. I've got the title."

"What's that?' I asked him. He cast his eyes to Heaven and he said very slowly, "MY FRIENDS CALL ME BING. How do you like it?"

"Four words too many" I said, and truly I don't suppose there are, or were, more than two, or three people in the world who would be instantly recognisable - and all around the world - by a single word,

I first ran into him on the set of one of the early Hope / Crosby Road movies and I think I got a false impression of him right away, because he was, if not exactly rollicking, saucy, mischievous, almost gabby when he was working, especially with Hope. They, on that day, I recall, ad libbed so much and broke down in chuckles so often while they were being filmed that at one point Bing turned to a writer who was sitting beside the camera and said: "If you hear any of your lines, shout BINGO!"

Of course, Bing was witty in a droll way. Nobody else would have described his face, with its flapping ears, as looking like a taxicab with both doors open. But the movie image of Bing was a very high pressure version of the man off the set. Once the lights dimmed and the director said 'It's a take' Bing visibly drooped into a character so quiet, so shambling and low-key, that I always got the impression that he'd had a sleepless night and would soon be off for a nap.

People used to say to me: "What was Bing like playing golf? I'll bet he was uproarious. Right?" In fact, he was relaxed to the point of boredom - good-natured boredom. It's true, he always looked you in the eye, but they were the grey, steady eyes of a man who had seen everything; a lot of fun, but also a lot of grief, and was never going to be surprised by anything said or done

From his early success days with The Rhythm Boys and on into his movie career, there had been all sorts of problems in and around his family and friends - sickness, death, the bottle, truancy, trouble with his boys, until he came into port at last, after a lot of stormy seas, with his second wife and his new family. It is possible that he talked about these things to very close friends, but to everyone else he put up the quiet defence of offhand, easygoing, small talk.

I cannot think of another man of anything like his fame who was so unrattled and so steadily, unflaggingly, modest. The curse of show business, you know, that strikes even the greatest, is Prima Donna-ism, the massive ego; the implication - they affect to hide - that the whole world is revolving around them and their new picture, their new plans, which they pretend to find delightful but embarrassing. Not Bing. He was more mature than

anyone else I've known in coming to sensible terms with great fame. His mail must have been staggering with appeals for favour and money from every charity and every crackpot in the world. He never mentioned it. He was polite to every nice fan and every child and every moron who hailed him. All his later concerts and Pro-Am Golf Tournaments went to his own charities.

When he died there was, as you know, a spate of film clips and replayed old interviews and the like. The most startling and revealing of these was one done very shortly before he died by the American news interviewer, Barbara Walters, who has a knack for asking the piercing, childlike questions we would all like to ask - but don't dare. She asked him to sum himself up and he allowed that he had an easy temperament,, a way with a song, a fair vocabulary, a contented life. And she said, "Are you telling us that that's all there is - a nice, superficial shell of a man?"

And Bing said: "Sure,, that's about it. I have no deep thoughts, no profound philosophy. That's right, I guess. That's what I am."

It was so startling so honest and probably so true that it explained why he had been able, through hard times, to stay on an even keel; why because he didn't over-identify with other people's troubles he was able to appear, and to be, everybody's easygoing buddy.

And because death is so profound and so dramatic, so showy, that's why some of us cannot believe he won't show up in the locker-room tomorrow and say: "Well skipper, how's tricks?"

Alistair Cooke

BING ON TELEVISION - AS SEEN BY VARIETY MAGAZINE

Several years ago we published listings covering Bing's career in television and in more recent times we have become aware that Variety magazine has published separate volumes containing all of its reviews of television shows. Naturally I have been through these tomes looking for mentions of Bing and I thought it might be of interest if I shared some of these entries with you all.

Bing's first TV appearance was in December 1948 when he took part in the Philco Television Playhouse and sang 'Silent Night'. His contribution was filmed in advance and it can be seen in the video 'The Magic of Bing Crosby' which is, I believe, still available. The Variety review of this show was reproduced on page 51 of BING 118. It was June 1952 before Variety reviewed another Bing appearance and this time it was a 14 hour telethon with Bob Hope to raise funds for the U. S. Olympic team. Here's an extract:-

"It was an occasion for some major TV 'firsts', including foremost the long awaited debut of Crosby as a video personality. He demonstrated (toupee and all, a la pix Crosby as distinct from the hat-toting, sports attired, pipe smoking Bingle of the radio studio audience) that he's a natural and 'sure bet' in the transition to TV, adding an affirmative addenda to the current wholesale jockeying among the top bankrollers in TV to latch on to his services for the upcoming semester."

And of course the reviewer did not know that Dixie had undergone a serious operation only three days previously. Bing joined Bob again in January 1953 on the Colgate Comedy Hour to plug 'Road to Bali' but a year was to pass by before Bing appeared in the TV reviews section of Variety magazine again and this time it was his own show. The Variety reviewer seemed to like it as you will see. His remaining appearances in 1954 were on another of his own shows, on a Jack Benny show and on an interview with Ed Murrow. We have pleasure in reproducing all of these reviews with grateful thanks to Variety. Bing had made a great start in TV and we'll reproduce some cuttings from Variety about his next few years in the medium in the next issue.

Bing and Frank Sinatra share a joke at the Olympic Telethon in June 1952 whilst Dorothy Lamour reads out some of the pledges and Bob Hope takes a break.

Bing on Television - As Seen by Variety Magazine

JAN. 4, 1953

BOB HOPE
(Colgate Comedy Hour)
Sunday, 8-9 p.m., KNBH

Bob Hope hit his top comedy level of the season with a sprightly hour of gags and quips on last night's Comedy Hour. There was plenty of help around but Hope took over from the start and the tempo whisked from his opening monolog to the "Road To Bali" scene, which brought on Bing Crosby as a surprise guest making his debut on commercial television.

Few comics can stand up in a monolog routine for 10 minutes as did Hope and keep the sitters howling. His biggest laugh-getter in the spot was the spoof on Milton Berle trying to top Lucille Ball's imminent motherhood even though he saw three Danish doctors. His Rose Bowl and Hollywood Freeway gags were too local to win the same hearty response along the cable. But Hope was dialog-happy and after a song by Don Cherry, a golf champ with a voice in the 70's, took on Jack Buchanan and Marilyn Maxwell for rounds of repartee. They sparkled and fizzled by turns. Buchanan, one of the greats of British legit musical comedy, now here making a picture at Metro, took part in most of the merriment and donned top hat and tails for a hoofing number with Hope.

Buchanan disported with all the ease and grace of his polished talent and was a definite asset in the Hope melange of comedy, song and dance. Miss Maxwell proved both an acceptable singer and sounding board for Hope's gags, with poise and pulchritude to dress up the scenes. Two sketches ribbing the British type of broadcasting American favorites and a small hotel bit with Miss Maxwell came off well but there was an evident strain for laughs.

Hope reserved the closing minutes for Crosby's entry and a long pitch for their Paramount picture, "Road To Bali," in which each has a financial participation stake. By actual count "Bali" was mentioned 12 times and the Groaner walked off with a neon sign that spelled out "Road To Bali." Cros twitted Hope for his crass commercialism in plugging the picture but passed off his own guesting with "anything to get a buck at the box-office." It was a gratis shot by Bing but Hope promised to pay it back.

For a closer, Bing, Bob and Buchanan did a song-and-dance and then came on with ukes, which they didn't have time to play. Nor was there time for the Quintette Allegro, pencilled out to avoid a run-over.

Several years ago we published listings covering Bing's career in television and in more recent times we have become aware that Variety magazine has published separate volumes containing all of its reviews of television shows. Naturally I have been through these tomes looking for mentions of Bing and I thought it might be of interest if I shared some of these entries with you all.

Bing's first TV appearance was in December 1948 when he took part in the Philco Television Playhouse and sang 'Silent Night'. His contribution was filmed in advance and it can be seen in the video 'The Magic of Bing Crosby' which is, I believe, still available. The Variety review of this show was reproduced on page 51 of BING 118. It was June 1952 before Variety reviewed another Bing appearance and this time it was a 14 hour telethon with Bob Hope to raise funds for the U. S. Olympic team. Here's an extract:-

> *"It was an occasion for some major TV 'firsts', including foremost the long awaited debut of Crosby as a video personality. He demonstrated (toupee and all, a la pix Crosby as distinct from the hat-toting, sports attired, pipe smoking Bingle of the radio studio audience) that he's a natural and 'sure bet' in the transition to TV, adding an affirmative addenda to the current wholesale jockeying among the top bankrollers in TV to latch on to his services for the upcoming semester."*

And of course the reviewer did not know that Dixie had undergone a serious operation only three days previously. Bing joined Bob again in January 1953 on the Colgate Comedy Hour to plug 'Road to Bali' but a year was to pass by before Bing appeared in the TV reviews section of Variety magazine again and this time it was his own show. The Variety reviewer seemed to like it as you will see. His remaining appearances in 1954 were on another of his own shows, on a Jack Benny show and on an interview with Ed Murrow. We have pleasure in reproducing all of these reviews with grateful thanks to Variety. Bing had made a great start in TV and we'll reproduce some cuttings from Variety about his next few years in the medium in the next issue.

JAN. 3, 1954

BING CROSBY SHOW
With John Scott Trotter Orch, Ken Carpenter, Jack Benny, Sheree North, others
Writer-Producer: Bill Morrow
Director: Frederick deCordova
30 Mins., Sun (3) 9 p.m.
GENERAL ELECTRIC
CBS-TV, from Hollywood (film)
(BBD&O)

The Bing banged over a whopping first show on tv for General Electric. With the new year only three days old as Crosby ushered in his video debut with his own series, sporadic though they'll be, it automatically gave an aura of shining expectancy to the '54 outlook.

For years it's been axiomatic in radio that BC can do no wrong. On the basis of the GE Sunday night bow (in the usual Fred Waring at 9 time on CBS-tv, it goes in spades. It can be argued that Bing's decision to "go film" instead of live stripped the half-hour show of a certain spontaneity element (this reviewer, for one, would have preferred a "live" Crosby). At this stage of the game it might seem totally unnecessary and unreal for the Groaner to dandify himself in an effort to look 25 again; and it can be argued that the singer has yet to achieve an on-camera tv stance more appropriate to his demeanor and casualness. It can also be argued that there was no reason for the Bing to permit his initial showcase to fall from grace and its high qualitative level by introducing a stripper (Sheree North).

The fact remains that none of it really mattered—for if there's a more natural, sure and at-ease performer in show biz he's still being kept under wraps. Whatever the minor flaws of Chapter 1 on the Crosby GE tv agenda, and they were apparent, they'll probably be takes care of now that Mr. Big has finally succumbed to video's blandishments.

What is important are the positive factors about the Bing's first show; that he's got himself a format without really requiring a format (which, of course, means nothing more than a relaxed, informal 30-minute sequencing of songs and the inevitable banter with a guest star—particularly when the guest is a Jack Benny). As it turned out this was one of those dream talent parlays, a visual throwback to ex-radio semesters of the Hope-Crosby byplay, which set some kind of a high mark in comedics on the listening-only circuit. The Benny-Crosby interlude was a little gem in itself. It was so good that the introduction of a third party in the person of Miss North didn't hurt it—but it didn't help it, either.

What is important, too, in the Groaner's first time up, was the clincher that all the surrounding Crosby show components (John Scott Trotter's musical backgrounding, Ken Carpenter, and more notably Bill Morrow's solid contribs as writer-producer) have made the AM-to-tv transition with the same grace and ease. Chalk up as a plus factor, too, the directorial assist from Frederick deCordova (who does the Burns & Allen CBS-tv'er).

Bing bodes some happy video semesters for '54. *Rose.*

MARCH 21, 1954

JACK BENNY

Filmed by McCadden Productions for American Tobacco (BBD&O). Producer-director, Ralph Levy; associate producer, Hilliard Marks; writers, Sam Perrin, George Balzer, Milt Josefsberg, John Tackaberry; music director, Mahlon Merrick; camera, Phil Tannura; film editors, Stanley Frazen and Richard Meyer.

Cast—Jack Benny, Bing Crosby, George Burns, Bob Hope, Rochester, Don Wilson, Jay Novello. KNXT-CBS, 7 p.m. Running time: 30 mins.

It has been said so often of Jack Benny's tv shows, "This is his seasonal standout," that the superlative becomes anti-climactic when it's reprised as a descriptive encomium. That last night's outing on film deserves to be ranked with his best of this or any other season is hereunto acclaimed regardless of his previous sorties into the higher qualitative echelons of show biz.

What did it was more than Benny and his premium guests: Bing Crosby, George Burns and Bob Hope. One of those tricky props, that is only fool-proof on celluloid, churned most of the howls and gave the show a rousing finish. It was merely a matter of catapulting Bing and Bob into a tree, but it was so carefully developed that Hope's one-liner was one of the year's biggest boffs and surprises.

Running situation opened the show, with Benny lolling in a hammock and being rocked by Rochester with a Rube Goldberg-like contraption. When it was speeded up, Benny spun like a top and landed in the tree. Bing got the same treatment when he held out for $10,000 a guest shot with Benny. "You'd better come down on your price," screamed Hope from another tree-top, "I've been up here four months." The howls rolled like a torrent and carried into Benny's curtain speech. It was easily one of the funniest bits seen on tv and a masterpiece of timing. It also pointed up one advantage of filming; no one would dare chance such a prop on a live show. If it flopped the whole show would have been hurt.

The show had its other high points, of sufficient laugh voltage to carry many another comedy stanza. Those three B boys—Bing, Benny and Burns—did a song-and-dance turn that dripped with nostalgia of the old vaude days. Decked out in blue coat, white pants and straw sailors, they sang and soft-shoed like when they "killed 'em in Scranton." Each encored solo, with Bing singing "Mother" and Benny reciting the lyrics in mock dejection while the others hung their heads sadly. Burns took to hoofing for his turn after the fashion of a latter-day Pat Rooney. All three then came out with ukuleles, but played not a note. The applause was deafening but this was tv not vaude and time of essence.

Bing, paying back for Benny's guesting on his first tv show, got across another song in his easy and relaxed style from a sitting position. Don Wilson worked in a cute commercial for Luckies by peeling a banana as he would a Luckies wrapper. Film clip for the ciggie also showed Lew Worsham holing out his famous long pitch shot that won him a major golf tournament.

Show's brisk movement and yocked-up script reflected high tribute to producers Ralph Levy and Hilliard Marks and the writing battery, Sam Perrin, George Balzer, Milt Josefsberg and John Tackaberry. Filming was first rate. *Helm.*

APR. 25, 1954

BING CROSBY

Filmed by McCadden Productions for General Electric (BBD&O). Producer, Bill Morrow; director, Lee Goodwins; writer, Morrow; music director, John Scott Trotter; camera, Phil Tannura; film editor, Guy Scarpitta.

Cast—Bing Crosby, Joanne Gilbert, Wiere Bros., Buddy Cole. KNXT, Sun., 9 p.m. Running time: 30 mins.

There'll be as much critical controversy over this second telefilm by Crosby as over his first one with Shereo North. The issue here is clean-cut: can Bing just stand up and sing without any production or props—and get away with it? Aside from a song by Joanne Gilbert and some monkey-shines by the three Wiere Bros., it was all Crosby in front of a drop and mostly in close-up flexing his pipes.

The Crosby fans will be pleasantly serenaded ("he's singing to me") but the critical clan may show their claws. They might contend that it's little more than radio with a framed picture of Bing sitting atop the set. The Crosby camp claims that such simplified production was the result of a study made of hundreds of letters, most of them asking only that "Bing sing." That he does and in as good voice as in the relaxed calm of his fatherly days.

Decked out in sports jacket with an emblem, he gives out with "Dear Hearts and Gentle People" and "Young At Heart," all the while hands in pockets. Miss Gilbert then comes on (in bright flare skirt, discarding her nitery attire of sequined slacks) to thrush "Singin' In the Rain" with the softness of morning dew. Changing to a business suit ("for the first time I've been left off the list of the five worst dressers") Crosby saunters over to a piano where Buddy Cole is benched and with complete detachment raises his voice ("from a bag of old chestnuts") and pipes "After You've Gone." He closes out the musicale with "Secret Love" and signs off a "good night" and not "good bye." Bing had been quoted as saying "this is my last."

The Wieres indulge in their familiar comedy pattern of grinning, dancing, fiddling and hat tricks. It's still a laugh-getter despite the many times they've been around without varying their routine. Bill Morrow's script and production are properly appropriate without any great strain on his time or talents. *Helm.*

OCT. 17, 1954

Ed Sullivan evidently has a soft spot for Liberace and gave him just about half of his "Toast of the Town" stanza on CBS-TV Sunday night (17). That Liberace is a show biz phenom is a cliche by now, but he doesn't add up to a performer who can carry a variety show; especially when he spends about 10 minutes giving very folksy introes to the sidemen in his touring orchestra, under his brother George Liberace's baton.

Otherwise, it was a firstrate session marked by a topnotch film clip of a Sullivan interview with Bing Crosby on the Coast. The Crosby bit was a plug for the Paramount pic "White Christmas" (which, incidentally, has been getting a hefty slice of cuffo time both radio and tv via Irving Berlin's current pic and songplugging activities); but the Groaner was in his niftiest form as a casual personality and his relaxed way before the cameras belied the existence of what must have been an army of Paramount technicians to make this ultra-professional-looking "home movie" sequence. Sullivan opened with a few remarks and Crosby carried the ball from that point onwards, chatting amiably and delivering snatches of Berlin tunes without accompaniment except for one number, "Gee, I Wish I Was Back In The Army." It was a tip-top trailer.

DEC. 3, 1954

Ed Murrow has had pros before on "Person to Person" but more than one froze up like a Frigidaire in an igloo when it came to humanizing themselves in their quarter-hour voluntary exposes of their pseudo-private lives. Some erred the other way, being so gayly abandoned as to dissipate the intime values that "P-to-P" suggests. But Murrow hit the jackpot this past Friday night (3), over CBS-TV, with Bing Crosby and Mary Margaret McBride in a manner that should average him out well for some time to come so far as the "right" standard of values goes.

The best answer is that the public wished neither ended. It has been the other way in quite a few other instances when comedians or other show biz personalities "relaxing at home" were anything but. Along with it, they bored their dialer-inners.

With Crosby this was a compelling Cook's tour of his Hollywood manse, and Miss McBride perhaps had a shade the better of it with her personal gallery and galaxy from her Central Park South (N.Y.) duplex. If Crosby were any more relaxed he'd collapse, but that didn't impair the efficiency of his guideposts to a variety of items, from the 19 Decca "gold" platters to the late Dixie Crosby's Copenhagen China collection. He hummed "This Ole House" in tongue-in-cheek manner, and interlarded a dash of "Count Your Blessings" in a casual style which bespoke innate showmanship—he even had the right "theme" songs for the occasion. He got in the right degree of plugging for his upcoming "Country Girl" (Par), saluted his late gagman Barney Dean, spotlighted his "real" friends, spoke about the boys—Lindsay was the only one present—and even got in a fast dash of his case against "Oop! Shoop!" and "Sh-Boom," which his four "toughest critics"—his sons—apparently hold in higher esteem than does the Groaner. He admitted that bringing up the four boys was his toughest job.

GLIMPSES BEHIND THE STARDUST

Ken Merry contrasts Bing the superstar with Bing the human being.

Standing up for the first time we stagger forward on the undulating ground of the impending years and we learn some movements of the Tarantella and the Soft Shoe Shuffle to stay upright on the quaking asphalt of the rolling days. To continue we acquire a little of the dexterity of the feet of Charlie Chaplin's Tramp, the uncertain stumble of Jacques Tati's Monsieur Hulot and if we are lucky some of the twinkle of Fred Astaire's toes. We are dominated by the clock, the calendar and necessity and the events of the time-scale we have been thrust into. We welcome any laughter, lots of music and the magic carpet of minor delights which seems to unfold with the seasons." One of these delights was a universal constant; Bing Crosby or, Bing, who was accepted as a part of the natural scheme of things. We basked in the warmth of the voice, which was comforting and paid gladly to gaze on the charismatic image of the cinema screen.

However, and there is always an however, time has a surreptitious habit of bringing changes with its passing and in doing so often diminishes what is humane and pleasant. Post 1950s years have befogged Bing's image and even those who followed in his musical tradition have been called away forever and we are now with the remnants of a century which will be soon as forgotten historically as Bing is culturally.

Now if we are judicious we can attempt to observe aspects of our time-scale which will reveal more than the conventional retrospective. We can see Bing not just as an integral part of the era but as the musical phenomenon he was. An irony is that he never realised himself the significance of the cultural contribution he made. To be relished by connoisseurs are glimpses of Bing which are not likely to appear in standard biographies. In his days with Whiteman when there was no inkling that he would become a 20th Century icon he was a friend of some of the greatest jazz men of the century. Some of their reminiscences:-

Frankie Trumbauer:- "Bix went into the brass section (Paul Whiteman's) with no idea what was going on ..... I was just as groggy as he was. A great many stars were in that band.... Bing Crosby, The Dorsey Brothers, Grofe."

Jimmy MePartland:- " .... got a call from Bix..... All during the date at the theatre a troupe of us gathered at the Three Deuces and jammed. Bing Crosby would play the drums if there was no drummer."

Mezz Mezzrow:- "Bix came backstage with Bing Crosby (Bing was with the Rhythm Boys). The first thing he said was 'Come on. Let's go for a drink'..."

Frank Walker:- "I had my share of recording with .....Bessie and Clara Smith, Fletcher Henderson, Benny Goodman, Bing Crosby, Glenn Miller -- right up to George Shearing."

Eddie Condon:- " One night I called for Bix backstage and he said 'We are going to a party to Cicero. Some guy has invited Crosby. He is going to send a car.' The three of us stood outside the theatre and waited. Crosby was slim, dapper and full of laryngitis. 'It's the water', Bix explained, 'it's full of germs.' I asked Crosby who the friend was who had invited him to Cicero. Cicero at the time had a not too fragrant reputation. 'Some big shot,' Bing said. 'He's throwing a party at a place called the Greyhound.' A long black car drove up to the kerb and we were told to get in the back seat. At the Greyhound we were greeted with open arms and bulging hip pockets. There was a lot of drinking and soon Bix was at the piano and Crosby was trying to sing through his laryngitis. Later as I was beginning to worry about internal drowning, the long black car returned and we were put into the back seat again. As we drove along Bix said drowsily 'Lovely party'. 'Lovely people.' Crosby croaked. After a while I said to Bix, 'Remember that guy you kept telling to shut up.' 'Sure' said Bix, 'Why didn't I knock him down. I'm too good-natured.'

'I thought you would like to know his name.' I said.

'The hell with his name.' Bix said.

'His name is Capone.' I said. 'Bottles Capone'.

'Lovely people.' Crosby croaked.

Such reports provide a glimpse of the young Bing when there was no indication of his becoming a future 20th Century icon and a hint of the human dimension often overlooked by us in our perception of our superstar. There are other glimpses. The lady who with some tetchiness dismissed some carol singers from her front door. A man and four boys. She was surprised later when she learned that she had turned away Bing Crosby and his four sons.

Peggy Lee related to Alan Dell instances of Bing's kindness. She said that the books which gave Bing a bad image were wrong and that Gary Crosby ought to have apologised to Bing for what he reported about him. When an increasingly successful singer, Peggy Lee had a luncheon appointment with Bing in San Francisco. She had a mishap with her hair and was an hour late. She said that Bing was always punctual. Bing waited and when she explained, Bing just laughed. During the luncheon Peggy told Bing that he was her screen idol and that she was particularly entranced with his singing of the Rodgers and Hart song 'Down By The River'. Bing took her all over San Francisco to find a pianist. He sat her at a table and sang the song just to her. She said he was a sweet man.

Occasionally there came media indications. Towards the end of World War II, Bing landed by ship in Scotland. A docker recognised Bing as he disembarked and said ' Give us a song Bing'. Bing duly obliged. It was exciting when he was introduced on popular radio programmes. The response of the audience was always tumultuous. I remember as a lad hearing a radio broadcast in which Bing sang with the Glenn Miller A.E.F. orchestra. Who could forget it? There was the story Bing related on radio much later. Bing and Fred Astaire went to France on a tour of entertaining the forces. They called in a cafe and the waitress recognised Fred but not Bing. The young waitress exhibited much enthusiasm. Bing pulled Fred's leg. 'You are big over here'.

As the post-war years rolled on Bing's career became progressively quieter. He visited these shores regularly. He would visit the Doncaster races. There would be a buzz in the town. 'Bing's at the races'. He would be heard on radio and introduced on regional as well as national television. The introduction was usually 'A legend in his own lifetime'. On national radio he hosted a Bank

Holiday record choice programme. He was on 'Desert Island Discs'. He was guest on a Vera Lynn TV show. He appeared on quite a few celebrity golf games on TV. He appeared unscheduled on TV and gave a brief eulogy on Johnny Mercer who had just died.

Of all TV programmes, he appeared on 'Top Of The Pops' and sang 'That's What Life Is All About'.

Over a diminishing time-scale these are glimpses of the human being behind the superstar. A recent report in a nostalgia magazine gives much satisfaction. It seems that Fred Astaire was in a supermarket where he encountered Gary Crosby and blasted him for writing bad things about Bing. However the human being and not the superstar is of a private dimension and like all of us has to stalk the daily sidewalks that lead to those slippery stepping stones of daily duties. The Bing we share is of a Never-Never land not entirely of this world. This place is necessary for us to sometimes escape the bland and the almost unbearable nature of reality. This land is somewhere between here and eternity. It is a land of song, enchanting images, irresistible sounds and heavenly voices.

Ken Merry

BING - The Once And Future King?

It's nice to welcome Clive Menadue back to our pages with some interesting thoughts. Incidentally, Clive also supplied the colour photo used on the back cover.

Just the other day I was lounging in my favourite armchair (I was once selected to lounge for Britain!) awaiting the appearance of a show I wished to see on the telly and dreaming of my youth and the cunning plan I once concocted. The gist of it was that I would woo and marry Marilyn Monroe and, through my association with her, have an opportunity to meet Bing Crosby. As you will remember, Marilyn ruined my scheme by marrying same baseball player or other and then, a little later divorced him and married an obscure little chap who knocked out the odd play or two. Well, more fool her! Had she shown just a little more patience I could have saved her from all that and introduced her to a life of penury in Wales which I'm sure is what she really wanted. I believe Lionel Pairpoint had much the same experience at an earlier date with Mary Pickford. But I digress, must get some tablets for it.

There I was then, happily musing in my chair and gazing at the screen when my senses were suddenly assaulted by the appearance of a number of callow youths wearing white suits that must have been thrown at them in the dark by a drunken tailor. The trousers, at least a foot too long, crumpled unnervingly above footwear that I last saw ascending Mount Everest. The ensemble was completed by jackets which appeared to have been lovingly copied from the original worn by Boris Karloff in his role as the Frankenstein monster.

The sight of these lads cavorting about in some kind of elephantine dance with one leg often raised in the air upset me considerably and I wondered at their boldness in hiring a Sumo wrestler to be their dance director. They were announced as a "Boys Band" just in case anyone became confused as to their gender. Most of BING's readers will recall that this was never a problem in our day when we all wore rough tweed suits, hobnailed boots and aggressively smoked foul smelling pipes stuffed with Old Shepherd's rough cut (naval strength) tobacco whilst shouting at each other in very deep voices.

When I'd switched off the telly and settled my nerves with a drop of the hard stuff, I began to think of how Bing might fare in the future and if there was any way in which his talents might force him back into the limelight in the years to come so that he would have the opportunity to enrich the lives of people yet unborn as he has enriched ours; and this is the dream I began to dream.....

The year could be anything from 2030 to 2050. The place could be any large city or town. We are standing in a street devoid of traffic, gazing up at a towering complex of buildings devoted to public welfare and entertainment. High above us multicoloured letters float and flash against the clouded evening sky. They read:-

Bing Crosby, Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour
in
ROAD TO THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH.

Yes, they're back - and they're better than ever!!

Inside the building, the foyer is crowded with excited, chattering people clutching their three dimensional pictures of the stars and programmes that contain recordings of songs and music from the film that can be replayed at the touch of button on the back page. The cinema itself is huge and most of the rising tiers of seats are filled. Music enriched by harps and strings begins to swirl around the theatre's walls as a delicate perfumed mist drifts in eddies through the air. The audience settles as a vast screen emerges from the far end of the building and appears to float on banks of hazy, subdued and beautifully hued lights.

The cinema darkens and the air around us is suddenly alive with the distant cries of jungle animals and the sigh of the breeze moving through the undergrowth and on the floating screen we see a forest clearing emerge from the mist in sparkling 3D as the camera tracks around revealing tropical flowers in startling colours nodding in the breeze. Suddenly the music swells and as we are drawn back a little further from the glade we see that it has a pool at its centre and, rising from that, is a golden cascade of glittering water. From its misty droplets the words of the title form and the music takes on an eerie throbbing beat from which Bing's voice suddenly emerges with an amazing clarity and tone to sing the haunting title song, "The Fountain Of Youth".

Bing emerges slowly from the undergrowth looking elderly but distinguished as in the opening scenes of "Utopia." The audience sighs and listens in rapt silence. The scene changes and we see an elderly Bob Hope limping along with the aid of a bent stick and being supported by an old lady who looks remarkably like Dorothy Lamour.

"Oh listen," she says, stopping for a moment as Bing's voice is heard in the distance.

"What's that?" asks Hope irritably cupping his hand to his ear, "Has someone been hurt?" He turns to face the audience and says, "I've heard of a death rattle but this is ridiculous!"

The audience roars as the music bursts into an arrangement comprised of selections from all the previous "Road" films with brief images from each one spinning in and out of view.

Well, you can fill in the rest of the plot yourselves if you feel disposed to do so. It's more likely though that most of you will be saying that it all sounds very nice but there's no chance of it ever happening. Maybe I'm wrong again, as Bing would have put it, but I think there's every chance of this vision coming to pass if the one unpredictable element in the equation goes my way. I mean of course - Public taste. Will Bing be a world favourite again in the years to come? I think this depends almost entirely on a revival of the kind of music with which he's associated; melodic and lilting songs plus cleverly written, bright and slyly humorous upbeat numbers.

Obviously nothing can be guaranteed, but the good news is that the sometimes desperate attempts by factions in the music industry to divert popular music from its traditionally mainstream base into directions that can only be considered (by my generation at least) as bizarre, have failed to eliminate a desire for melody and well written lyrics in a majority of the population.

Some of the very young will, as they always have, be drawn to the loud and the repetitive be it 'Rap' or 'Punk Rock' and sometimes this is only because the heavy and monotonous beat is suitable for the kind of frenzied dancing the younger element enjoy nowadays. I can't afford to be too critical as I still have the recording of 'The Hawaiian War Chant' by Tommy Dorsey's band which was always guaranteed to upset my parents when I played it loudly at home. Had earphones been around then I would probably be deaf now and sadly unable to enjoy my collection of Bing's records.

It is very noticeable that although nearly forty years have passed since The Beatles rejuvenated the sluggish and occasionally maudlin music scene of the late fifties and early sixties (remember 'The Wedding of Lili Marlene' etc.?) and attempted to move popular music towards some distant boundary which could only be visualised by the young, the record buying public always snapped back towards the centre like a piece of over stretched elastic. Hence the enormous sales of recordings by Julio Iglesias, Robson and Jerome, and in fact anyone with a half reasonable voice who can handle a song.

All of this seems to me to demonstrate, that while music may veer in all directions over the years, as indeed it has in my own lifetime, the desire for the melodic and the beautiful will continue to act as a kind of gravity and draw taste inevitably back to the lilting centre of popular music where it must encounter Bing with his truly enchanting voice and his relaxed and friendly manner. It seems to me that these attributes are not so common that the future will be able to deny and neglect them; I don't think it will. If that vital part of the dream falls into place then everything else should follow as the night follows the day.

You'll be aware that when you play a Crosby track on your CD player, you are hearing Bing more accurately and clearly than people did on their cranky old record players when the discs were new! Now that sound engineering is becoming increasingly sophisticated it won't be long before it will be possible to extract Bing's voice from records and sound tracks

and reproduce it so that it sounds as if you were present in the studio when he originally recorded the song. Having left all the hissing and the dated accompaniments behind there is no limit to what can be done. I doubt if it will be too long before they will be able to take samples of Bing's singing and speaking voice and, with the aid of computers and other things we've not yet heard of, will have him say and sing anything the entertainment industry and the public wishes.

As for Bing, Bob and Dottie performing in a new "Road" film when they've been gone for many years-- no problem there. Virtual reality has been around for some time now, and though it was crude to begin with, as all new innovations are, it's rapidly improving. By 2030 or so they will be able to make films without human stars. Instead the stars will be computer created clones who will act and speak and sing as they did years before. Bogart and Cagney, Gable and Monroe; all of them will be enabled to resume their careers and make new films related to the problems and conditions common to another time and place.

Best of all though from my point of view, Bing will be back making new "Road" films and films about Christmas which will give future festive seasons an enormous boost. Wish you could be there?

Well, scientists say they are making a breakthrough into the causes of ageing and may yet come up with an antidote. So maybe I'll see all of you, young and vibrant and fashionably dressed in orange suits with deep blue bowler hats and the popular 'flipper' shoes, outside the theatre in 2030. Well -- maybe. Hang on, I've just looked in the mirror, --- don't bet on it!

Clive Menadue

(Editor: Clive submitted his article last year and he was clearly ahead of his time. In June, USA TODAY carried an article about a man who has bought up the rights to some of the old Hollywood stars. His plan is to use digital technology to make them live again as talking, three-dimensional 'brands' through his company Virtual Celebrity Productions. He doesn't own the stars but represents their estates. Guess who is included in the scheme? Yes, Bing and Bob Hope. Clive's scenario could come true!)

CROONER'S LULLABY

It's a pleasure to welcome Bob Achorn back to our pages with some startling information and some fascinating statistics.

A mystery is solved, or solved in part. One of Bing's "lost" songs turns out not to be lost, after all. The song is "Crooner's Lullaby." It can be heard on the soundtrack of the 1935 Paramount B-musical, "Millions in the Air." The song was written by Sam Coslow and Arthur Johnston, familiar Crosby songsmiths, for "The Big Broadcast of 1936." But when that film was released by Paramount in September, 1935, it included only one Crosby number. He sang "I Wished on the Moon."

While the "Big Broadcast' played movie houses, "Millions in the Air" was in production, for release three months later. The latter film centers on radio broadcasts of "Colonel Edwards' Amateur Hour," a takeoff on Major Bowes' Original Amateur Hour, then popular on network radio in the States. Various "amateurs" perform during the film. At one point, Colonel Edwards (Samuel S. Hinds) introduces a contestant played by Paul Newlan, a tall, rather hulking actor who had bits in several later Crosby films. Newlan comes on stage carrying two crying babies. He clutches them during the song. Newlan lip-synchs impassively (and not too precisely) while Crosby's distinctive voice rings out.

Although Bing was already a major star for Paramount, there is no reference to him in the film. He is not credited in any way. Nobody rushes up to Newlan and says "you sound just like Bing Crosby." The only amusement the film seeks from the Crosby-Newlan collaboration is the rather lame notion of babies crying during a lullaby. From the film's point of view, the singer could have been anybody. Perhaps Paramount was afraid that Bing would ask for compensation if attention was paid to his involvement.

"Crooner's Lullaby" carries expected lyrics ("Hushabye my baby".) It also gives Bing a chance to do some humming and go through some "la-di-dah-di-dah" crooning, which he handles nicely. With a piano introduction leading to backing by a full orchestra, he sings pleasantly, with the easy power he had in those years. The song lasts just under two minutes. Unfortunately, the sound quality is not good. The soundtrack, never up to later standards, has grown noisy over 64 years, at least in today's video. The recording of Crosby sounds somehow distant. The crying babies add to the din. Perhaps someone with the latest equipment could clean up the sound a bit. There is no indication that, apart from the soundtrack, Bing ever cut a record of the song or sang it on the radio. It has a pretty lilt to it, although it is not heavyweight material.

There is no explanation of how Crosby's voice ended up in this obscure film. Probably some Paramount executive remembered that the Crosby soundtrack was left over from "The Big Broadcast of 1936" and tossed it into the later film. But it is presented in a manner that dulls whatever impact it might have had. Like Crosby, Newlan labors under anonymity. Understandably, he is not one of the 10 actors billed in the opening titles. Less understandably, he doesn't appear in the American Film Institute list of 49 actors -- a large number for a minor film -- in the cast. Newlan is a non-person; so is Crosby. In fact, the whole episode is handled as if it didn't exist. But it does.

Otherwise, in "Millions in the Air," a young Robert Cummings sings a couple of numbers, including a repeat of "Love Is Just Around the Corner," originally heard in Bing's "Here Is My Heart" a year earlier. There is even a song effort by the unlikely pair of Wendy Barrie and John Howard, two spectacularly unmusical performers.

Perhaps the use of Bing's voice in this film led to the concept of "Out of This World" 10 years later. He provided the soundtrack for three songs mouthed by Eddie Bracken. But, in that case, there was no secret that Crosby was involved. Bracken even said from the screen, "Thanks, Bing."

Bing got no attention, no thanks and perhaps no extra money for "Crooner's Lullaby."

TOP BILLING

Bing's notable successes in recordings, radio and, to some extent, in television may have clouded his achievements in movies. He is seldom remembered today as one of the great Hollywood stars. Yet history suggests

that he was among the most successful.

He first began appearing in the 1930s on American lists of the 10 most popular film stars. For a remarkable five years, from 1944 through 1948, he was at the top of the list. More telling, perhaps, was billing. He was billed first, ahead of other performers, in 47 major films over 28 consecutive years. That is more unusual than it may seem. For one reason or another, such major Hollywood figures as Cary Grant, Gary Cooper, Bette Davis, James Stewart and Joan Crawford were not able to retain unbroken top billing for so many consecutive years, although they came fairly close. Even after his triumph in "Gone With the Wind" in 1939, Clark Gable had to take second billing to Norrna Shearer and Joan Crawford in a couple of films the following year.

Charles Chaplin had star billing for more consecutive years than Crosby, although in many fewer feature films. The endlessly popular John Wayne was first-billed in the United States scores of times, starting with obscure western films in the 1930s and ending with major epics in the '50s, '60s and '70s. But as late as 1946, he took second billing to Robert Montgomery in one movie and to Claudette Colbert in another.

Wayne's consecutive string of top billing was also interrupted in 1962 by "How the West Was Won," in which his alphabetical billing placed him between Eli Wallach and Richard Widmark near the end of the starring list. That film, by the way, claimed to be inspired by a series in Life magazine. The same series had earlier "suggested" Bing's album, "How the West Was Won," recorded in 1959 and released in 1960. The film used some of the same western songs, by different performers, but gave no credit for inspiration to Bing or his album.

Bing won top billing early in his Hollywood years. As an actor and singer in a feature film, "The Big Broadcast," in 1932, Crosby--already the popular radio star--was billed second to Stuart Erwin. Bing leapt to top billing in "College Humor" and "Too Much Harmony." But in his fourth major film role, on loan to MGM for the Hearst vanity production, "Going Hollywood," Bing had to take secondary billing to Marion Davies.

After that, he won first place for 28 consecutive years in films in which he played leading roles. His string of 47 top-billed roles, at least in the American market, began with "We're Not Dressing" in 1934 and ended with "The Road to Hong Kong" in 1962. Crosby's top billing did not mean that he demanded the limelight for himself. On the contrary, Bing relished co-starring with top names. Indeed, he often made modest comments along the lines of "I like someone to share the blame with me." An argument can be made that he was at his best working with strong co-stars; he rose to the challenge. In his 28 years at the top, he was billed ahead of such noted performers as Carole Lombard, Miriam Hopkins, W. C. Fields, Bob Hope, Fred Astaire, Ingrid Bergman, Grace Kelly, Danny Kaye, Fred MacMurray, William Holden -- each of whom enjoyed top-billing in some other films.

Some in Hollywood define stardom as being billed above the film's title. Bing achieved that in his sixth major feature, "She Loves Me Not." But his record in that regard was uneven. He was often billed below the film's title, although ahead of the rest of the cast. Near the end of his movie career, he could no longer command top billing. He may have lost interest in fighting about it, feeling he had nothing left to prove. For "Robin and the Seven Hoods" in 1964, he took eighth billing on screen and fourth billing in the film's advertising. For "Stagecoach," he accepted alphabetical billing, which put him down in the list of credits.

His role as the top-billed performer in his feature films was not without challenge. In the final Road film, "Road to Hong Kong," Crosby was introduced first on screen and was billed first, then had his name knocked out of the way by Bob Hope's (with Crosby's name rendered in tiny Chinese, while Hope's was in large English letters.) Dorothy Lamour, in her later days, used to claim that she invented the "Road" series and, as queen of the Paramount lot, was billed ahead of "the boys." Not quite true. If she was queen, Crosby was emperor and was always billed ahead of her. Her real point was that she was billed ahead of Bob Hope in "Road to Singapore," the first of the series.

There was nothing automatic about Crosby's top billing. In the cut-throat world of Hollywood, stars have to fight for what they get. Crosby's agents and managers kept him at the top for an extraordinary 28 years. The fact that he controlled production of some of the films helped. But that also helped other major stars who had some ownership of their later films.

How does this history of enormous movie success square with Bing's remembrance (in BING No. 118): "I took the smallest billing I could get--you last longer that way"? Obviously, it doesn't. Directly or indirectly, he demanded and got (and, based on performance and box office returns, deserved) the highest billing in film after film. And the money to match.

Near the end of his life, he kidded the whole idea in the song, "Top Billing," in his album with Fred Astaire. (Astaire finally won top billing on the LP cover, and Bing received it on the back cover.) But there may not have been as much kidding as the song suggested. For 28 years, it was a very serious business, as some of the other stars who made films with Crosby might have admitted in a dark moment.

Bob Achorn

(Editor: Some valid points from Bob and the information about 'Crooner's Lullaby' is incredible. I have heard a taping of the song and it certainly sounds a lot like Bing although opinions differ amongst the experts. If it is Bing, it is remarkable that Paramount used the song in that way and thank you Bob for making this discovery. I'll play the song at Leeds and see what everyone thinks.)

BING CROSBY - INFINITE VARIETY

It was under the above, so appropriate heading, that my good friend PAT FORSTER, introduced a recital to the Foreign Office Record Club meeting in 1955. On retirement Pat gave a repeat performance to the so fortunate members of the Midhurst Womens' Institute in 1980. These were the songs Pat played:

Protest Song.

Brother Can You Spare a Dime.

Cowboy Songs.
Empty Saddles: When the Bloom is on the Sage : Tumbling Tumbleweeds: The Last Round-up
Hawaiian
Song of the Islands: Aloha Oe: Sweet Leilani
Opera
I Got Plenty of Nuttin': Summertime: It Ain't Necessarily So
Rhythm
Wait 'til the Sun Shines, Nellie: I want my Mama: I Ain't Got Nobody: On Behalf of the Visiting Firemen
Traditional
Home on the Range: Beautiful Dreamer: Whiffenpoof Song: Lily of Laguna
Lullabies
Cradle Song: Kentucky Babe
Show Songs
Oh, What a Beautiful Morning
Comedy
I'm an Old Cowhand: Three Caballeros: The Spaniard That Blighted My Life: Feuding and Fighting
Latin America
South America, Take It Away: Baia

Love songs
I'll Be Seeing You: Long Ago and Far Away : Amor, Amor: You Belong to My Heart

Bearing in mind that Pat drew up her list in 1955, I think this is a very well thought out selection. It led me to wonder just how varied a range of songs Bing did record during his 51 year career. Could I, I mused, compile a Compact Disc (for amusement only) which would demonstrate just how versatile Bing was. Taking 25 as a reasonable number of recordings I eventually came up with this.

BING'S FANTASY 'INFINITE VARIETY' CD

1. Protest Song.
Brother, Can You Spare a Dime? 25th October 1932.
2. Unrequited Love song.
I've Got to Sing a Torch Song. 16th June 1933.
3. Cowboy Song.
The Last Round-up. 27th September 1933.
4. Hawaiian Song.
Aloha Oe 23rd June 1936
5. Children's Song.
The Girl with the Pigtails in Her Hair 9th February 1940
6. Bing sings harmony.
Gypsy Love Song. (with Frances Langford).
9th December 1938
7. Lullaby.
Cradle Song (Brahms) 23rd May 1941
8. Patriotic Song.
The Star Spangled Banner. 27th March 1939
9. Sung in Spanish.
Let Me Love You Tonight 8th June 1941 10. Swing song.
Walking the Floor Over You. 27th May 1942
11. Christmas song.
Silent Night 8th June 1942 12. Without instrumental backing.
Sunday, Monday or Always. 2nd July 1943
13. Comedy duet.
Put it there, pal. (with Bob Hope) 8th December 1944.
14. Booogie woogie song.
Pinetop's Boogie-woogie. 21st January 1946.
15. Exhilarating Square Dance Song.
Country Style. 19th November 1946
16. Yodelling Song.
Friendly Mountains. 17th March 1947
17. Hymn.
Rock of Ages. 6th May 1949
18. Be-bop
Be-bop Spoken Here (Patti Andrews)14th April 1949
19. Dixieland Jazz.
The Dixieland Band 24th March 1950
20. Irish Song.
The Isle of Innisfree 19th October 1951
21. Eccentric Accompaniment
Just a Little Lovin' 23rd March 1952
22. Unique vocal?
South Rampart Street Parade (with Andrews Sisters). 5th September 1952
23. Sporting Song.
Straight Down the Middle 31st December 1957
24. Country and Western Song.
Wabash Cannon Ball. 29th October 1963
25. A Proud Boast?
There's Nothing That I Haven't Sung About.
22nd July 1976

N.B. It has just struck me that 1 have left out quite a few styles of singing but I've run out of space. I look forward to suggestions from members to make up a second Compact Disc. Blame it on ol' Bing for being so uniquely versatile...

(with acknowledgements to Pat Forster who started me off on this delightful trail and gave me her kind permission to publish her original listings).

P.S. Does anyone know of any other vocalist who recorded South Rampart Street Parade?

John Bignell

ONCE IN A WHILE

The obituary section of the magazine.

Mel Torme - nicknamed 'The Velvet Fog' died on June 5. He was 73 and had suffered a stroke in August 1996 from which he never really recovered. Born in Chicago, his parents were Russian Jewish and they named him after Melvyn Douglas, the film star. At the age of 4, the bandleader at a local restaurant noticed Mel singing along with the band and brought him into the act for several months. He sat on the drummer's knee and sang 'You're Driving Me Crazy'. He went on to have an acting career on radio until his voice broke. As a 17 year old, he obtained a job as singer and arranger with the Chico Marx Orchestra and soon broke into films such as 'Higher and Higher' (which starred the young Frank Sinatra). After Army service in World War II, he sat in as a drummer with many big bands including Tommy Dorsey. In 1945, when he was only 20, he wrote the melody for 'The Christmas Song' and with lyrics by Bob Wells it became a huge hit for Nat 'King' Cole. Many artists, including Bing, went on to record it. He launched a solo singing career in 1946 after he and the Mel-Tones had recorded two songs with Bing, 'Day by Day' and 'Prove It By The Things You Do' which enjoyed some real success. He topped the charts in 1949 with 'Careless Hands' and his version of 'Again' reached number 3 in the Hit Parade, also in 1949. The song 'Mountain Greenery was his biggest hit in the UK reaching number 4 in 1956. His favourite singers included Bing, Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald and Fred Astaire. Mel wrote a number of books, including 'It Wasn't All Velvet' (his autobiography), 'The Other Side of The Rainbow' (describing his time as musical adviser for the Judy Garland TV show), and 'Traps, the Drum Wonder' (a biography of his friend Buddy Rich). Surprisingly in 1976, Torme's musical career began to blossom again following a concert he gave at Carnegie Hall with George Shearing and Gerry Mulligan. He won Grammy Awards for Best Male Jazz Vocal in 1982 and 1983 with 'An Evening with George Shearing and Mel Torme' and 'Top Drawer'. His last book was 'My Singing Teachers' in which he devoted a chapter to Bing and one of his last albums was dedicated to songs made famous by Bing. Mel guested on an episode of the sitcom 'The Bing Crosby Show' broadcast on ABC-TV on March 29, 1965.

Yehudi Menuhin, one of the world's most famous violinists died in March at the age of 82. Born in New York in 1916 to Russian Jewish parents, he was a child prodigy and astonished a San Francisco audience at the

Mel and his Mel-Tones record with Bing on September 13, 1945

age of 7 with a debut violin performance which was said to be brilliant for a violinist of any age. By the time he was 13, he had performed in Paris, London, Berlin and New York. He became a major figure in jazz as well as on the classical violin scene. Whilst he made his base in London, he was constantly travelling to perform until he retired from public performances in the 1980s. During the war years, Menuhin often entertained the armed forces and it was during this time, that he performed with Bing. On 15th April, 1944, he recorded Command Performance Show #115 with Bing and Dinah Shore and on 19th April, 1945 he appeared on the Kraft Music Hall and played two solos.

Charles "Buddy" Rogers, 94, who starred in the first film to win the best-picture Oscar, 'Wings', and who was married to Mary Pickford, died in California in April. Buddy Rogers has two Bing connections. The first is that he was seen briefly in the Bing short 'Star Night at the Cocoanut Grove' (1935) and also he starred in the film 'The River of Romance' (1929) a version of Booth Tarkington's play 'Magnolia' which was in turn later adapted for Bing and W. C. Fields and filmed as 'Mississippi'.

Al Hirt left us in April at the age of 76. Renowned as a great jazz trumpeter, he was nominated 21 times for a Grammy, winning in 1964 for his signature tune, 'Java'. He started out as a sidesman in the swing bands of Benny Goodman, Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey before returning to his native New Orleans in the '50s. At 6 feet two inches and weighing 300 pounds, he was an ever smiling bear of a man who enjoyed his greatest popular successes in the 1960s. He guested with Bing on the Dinah Shore TV show shown on February 17, 1963. When Bing gave a concert in New Orleans on September 10, 1976, he started to sing 'Basin Street Blues' and out of the audience came jazz greats Eddie Miller, Pete Fountain and Al Hirt to a standing ovation.

Gene Sarazen - a great golf champion of the past, Gene was lost to us in May at the age of 97. One of the few golfers to win the British Open and the US Open in the same year (1932). Bing played with Gene in the National Celebrities tournaments held in Washington in 1947 and 1948.

Hillary Brooke, the blond bombshell who appeared in about 50 films as a supporting actress died in May. She was 84. Films such as 'Jane Eyre' (1944) in which she played Blanche, 'Ministry of Fear' (1944) and 'The Enchanted Cottage' (1945) gave her critical acclaim. We know her from 'Road to Utopia' when she played Kate, the Klondike dance hall queen.

Bobbe Brox, the last surviving member of the singing Brox Sisters trio and the widow of Jimmy Van Heusen passed away in May at the good age of 98. The Brox Sisters enjoyed their greatest stage successes in the 1920s and in turn they obtained recording contracts with Victor and Brunswick. Songs such as 'Lazy', 'School House Blues' and 'Kentucky's Way of Saying 'Good Morning" were their most successful records. They appeared in a number of films including 'King of Jazz' where they performed 'A Bench in the Park' with the Rhythm Boys. Bobbe married Bing's friend, William Perlberg (then a William Morris agent, later a Hollywood producer), in 1928 and after their divorce in the 1960s she married Jimmy Van Heusen in 1969.

John Mullin, known as 'Jack' died in June . He was 85. Jack Mullin was the man who brought back a German 'magnetophon' tape recorder from Germany at the end of the Second World War. He approached Bing for support to develop his own machine and gave him a demonstration of the tape recorder in August 1947. Bing was convinced immediately and the face of transcribed radio programmes was changed forever. Mullin subsequently produced his own machine in conjunction with Ampex Corporation and tape was developed by 3M. Jack worked for Bing Crosby Enterprises as the lead recording engineer and then when his division was sold to 3M he worked with that company for 28 years. He will always be remembered for his part in changing the radio industry to accept recorded programmes and also for his pioneering work on video recorders.

GUESS WHO CAME TO DINNER?

My annual pilgrimage to the USA this year involved a round trip from Las Vegas through Arizona and California back to 'Vegas and we met Phillip Crosby on the way.

It has become almost a ritual for my wife and I to visit the USA each year and we try to explore new places as well as looking up old friends. Knowing that Phil Crosby was living in the Los Angeles area, I wrote to him and suggested we meet. Two long telephone conversations ensued and it was agreed that Phillip and his daughter Dixie Lee would drive down to Charles Baillie's home in Arcadia where we would be staying on May 6th. Charlie and Nancy Baillie had kindly asked Pat and I to stay with them as we passed through LA and Charlie arranged to host a dinner party for Phillip at the San Gabriel Country Club.

Phil is a friendly man who talks easily and openly about his views on many subjects. Now aged 64, he is experiencing some problems with his back and knees following a motor cycle accident many years ago. He is not active in show business at present because of these problems which is a pity. In arranging to meet Phil, I told him that it was not my wish to rake over the past but naturally I wanted to know more about his own career and also his views on the best way we could preserve his father's memory.

We all know about the Crosby Brothers vocal act and Phil described how they decided to close it down following the decision by the Ames Brothers to end their successful act. Phil rated the Ames Brothers very highly and he said that if they couldn't really prosper in the music scene of the 60s then the Crosby Brothers were hardly likely too either. Phil then had parts in several films including 'Robin and the Seven Hoods' when he uttered the immortal words 'Sit Down, Pops' to Allan A Dale (played by Bing). The Sinatra films 'None But The Brave' and 'Sergeants Three' also included Phil in the cast.

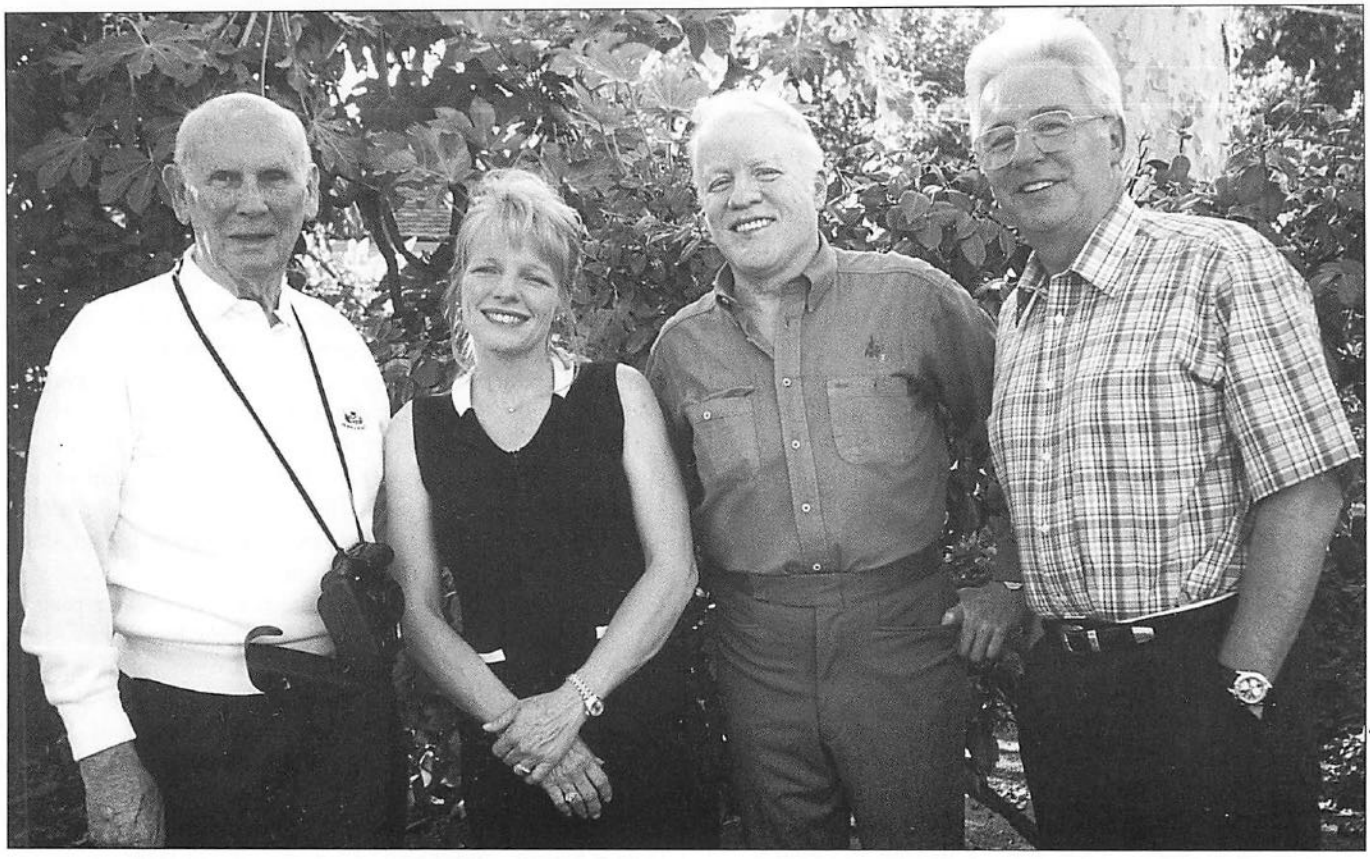
Around that time, Phil was one of the original investors in a chain of Mexican restaurants in California and he accepted what was at the time a generous offer to buy him out. The chain went on to become the huge Taco Bell organisation and if Phil had stayed in he would have made a fortune.

In the mid sixties, Phil was persuaded to develop his own solo act and he was trying this out at the Hyatt Hotel in Burlingame. His father was in Mexico at the time and Alan Fisher, Bing's butler, rang Phil and said "Mistah Phillip, are you available to have a few days in Mexico?" Alan offered to send either the Rolls or a more sporty vehicle to pick him up. Phil had to decline as he was building up his act but he did stay at Bing's home in Hillsborough during his time in the Bay area , sleeping in Mary Frances' room. With Bing living in a genteel suburb of San Francisco and having an English butler, Phil wondered if the children of the second marriage would grow up to be 'cissies' but his fears quickly evaporated when he took the two boys to a football match and he realised that they were very healthy normal lads.

Having developed his act, Phil went to Vietnam with Bob Hope on a couple of occasions and he enjoyed the experience so much that he returned there himself to entertain on several occasions. The way Phil talked about the experience I could tell that it had meant a lot to him and was perhaps the most rewarding part of his show business life. His daughter, Dixie Lee, mentioned how she used to receive long letters from Phil whilst he was in Vietnam. An opportunity then arose for Phil to take an interest in a night club in Atlanta where he performed nightly for some years. Dixie used to visit him there and after the customers had gone home, he would give her the opportunity to entertain herself in front of friends as she had a superb voice but she was always a little too shy. Phil laughed as he recalled that he would drive her home to the West Coast and she would then sing all the way back to Los Angeles.

Since disposing of his interest in the night club, Phil has bought back his father's former home at Hayden Lake, Idaho from a third party and he also has a home in Woodland Hills in North Hollywood. His daughter, Dixie, lives at Burbank which is not too far way. Phil clearly sees a lot of Dixie and her two children. She is married to a musician and her married name is Goodwin. The day we met was in fact Dixie's fortieth birthday and she must be the youngest looking 40 year old I have ever seen. Sadly, her brother, Brian, was killed in a motorcycle accident at the age of 18 in 1978 when Dixie was 19 and naturally she stills remembers the trauma of the event.

During our animated discussion over dinner (which often meant that Phil and I were lagging a course behind the rest of the table) I found myself answering queries from Phil on points of detail about Bing's career. At first, this seemed strange until I realised that it would be the same for any one of us. I have never studied my own father's life in minute detail, so anyone who had, would be able to clarify details for me. We talked about life on the ranch at Elko which Phil had enjoyed and the holiday at Hayden Lake which always followed the hard work at the ranch. I mentioned to Phil that I had copies of letters from his father to John Scott Trotter about the time at Hayden Lake when Bing mentioned the rules he attempted to enforce. Phil smiled as he recalled the sun down curfew that had been imposed at one time and how he and his brother Dennis used to have the rooms downstairs and could therefore slip out again without their father knowing. Phil said that his father never lied and



(From left to right) Charles Baillie, Dixie Crosby Goodwin, Phillip Crosby and Malcolm Macfarlane

always spelt out the 'rules of engagement' clearly to them. It was then up to them whether they conformed or not. As we know, Gary had great difficulty in observing these requirements.

Both Phillip and Dennis went to Washington State College at Pullman to study animal husbandry, no doubt with a view to becoming involved in the ranch. Dennis used to skip many classes and Bing found out about it. The next thing Dennis knew was that he had been called up for the Army and Phillip still recalls the day when a plane came to fetch his brother and he waved him goodbye. Many months later, Phillip was also called up for the Army and because of his animal husbandry experience, he found himself as a medical orderly at various nice camps in the USA. Dennis meanwhile was stationed in Germany and not enjoying it particularly. Dennis told Phil that twins could usually ask to be stationed together and he asked Phil to see what he could do to get him back to the USA. Both brothers contacted their commanding officers with the unexpected result that Phil finished up in Germany as well!

Phil spoke very warmly about Bob Hope although he admitted that he had not seen him for some time. In view of Bob's advancing age, I suggested to Phil that he ought to call round to see and he said he would do so. Phil talked about working with Frank Sinatra and apparently 'None But The Brave' was filmed on an island in Hawaii. I asked if Frank had the awful temper that the media would have us believe and Phil said that he only saw Frank lose his temper twice in two months and probably many people lose their temper at least twice in a similar period. Phil was friendly with Nancy Sinatra as a boy and he saw Nancy at her father's funeral when she said that they ought to keep in touch more often.

Dixie mentioned that Phil was not particularly well organised for keeping memorabilia and the scrapbooks maintained by the Crosby family's housekeeper, Georgie Hardwicke, have therefore been passed on to her. I showed Dixie a copy of the magazine 'Look' which featured the entire Crosby family including her as a baby. She had never seen this before and I have therefore arranged to send her copies. She had a battered copy of the LP made by the Crosby Brothers in the sixties and Wig has therefore sent her a good copy on cassette plus a taping of Phil's solo records of 'Thanks' and 'Please'. Charlie Baillie has also sent Phillip videos of the TV shows Phil made with his father.

Turning to the 'Mysteries and Scandals' TV programme, Phil was disgusted by it. He had given an interview at the Camarillo Street property for the same TV company in connection with a series about celebrity homes and he mistakenly understood that this was merely a follow-up. However I told Phil that it was a good job he was on the show because at least he was able to put the record straight. I mentioned the forthcoming book by Gary Giddins (which may well be published in October, 2000) and I suggested that Gary was someone we could trust. Phillip agreed to talk to him and subsequently I know that Gary has had two long telephone conversations with him.

All in all, it was a most pleasant and for me, stimulating evening. Our grateful thanks to Charles and Nancy Baillie for their most generous hospitality.

By the Time I Get to Phoenix....

Our meanderings on the West coast started at Las Vegas where incidentally we saw Little Richard and Chuck Berry in concert. Not much of a connection with Bing, but Little Richard in particular was most entertaining. My wife and I have a great arrangement when it comes to shopping. Whilst she goes round the local mall, I go to the local library and look up their newspaper records for the times Bing passed through the area. In Las Vegas, Bing participated for several years in an annual putting competition, which he won twice, and I took copies of the coverage for Ron Bosley's archives. One group photograph showed Liberace with his arm around Bing's shoulder. I bet the media could read something into that! Bing's charity performance in Las Vegas in 1976 was also covered and I may well reproduce the review in BING at a later date.

From Las Vegas, we journeyed south via Hoover Dam, Grand Canyon and Monument Valley to Scottsdale and Phoenix. Shops beckoned again so a trip to the library expanded my knowledge of Bing's visits to that area. The February 1942 trip to Phoenix was just an outline to me but now the entry in the diary I am maintaining of Bing's life reads as follows.

1942

Feb 6 Bing arrives in Phoenix, Arizona. Starting at 1:40 p.m., he takes part in the first round of the Western Open Golf Championship at the Phoenix Country Club where he tears his trousers during play. Playing with Jimmy Demaret and Ed Dudley, Bing has an 83. Bob Hope is supposed to play with them but is ill.

Feb 7 (starting at 10:50 a.m.) Bing plays in the second round of the Championship and this time Bob Hope is able to play with Bing, Demaret and Dudley.

Feb 8 (starting at 10:20 a.m.) The final round of the Championship. Bing plays with Sam Snead, Bob Goldwater and Robert Walker.

Feb 9 At a Phoenix night club, Bing is appointed as Honorary Director of the World's Championship Rodeo Committee by the Junior Chamber of Commerce.

Feb 11 Bing and Bob Hope are in Dallas, Texas where they take part in a golf exhibition at the Brook Hollow Club with other celebrities (including Johnny Weismuller) and 13 professional golfers to raise funds for the American Red Cross A crowd of 7,000 watch Bing (who shoots a 74) and Howard Creel beat Jimmy Demaret and Mrs. Merryl Israel 2 and 1. Bing and Bob go on to a club called the Log Cabin which is owned by their friend, Jack Pepper, where they both entertain.

Feb 12 Bing, Bob Hope and Johnny Weismuller play in a golf match at the Brae Burn Country Club in Houston, Texas before a crowd of 10,000 to raise funds for the United States war chest. Bing and Jimmy Demaret finish all square in their match with Bob Hope and Byron Nelson. Bing has a 78. The stars entertain the crowd on the 18th green at the end of the match.

Feb 13 Bing and Bob Hope play in a foursome with Byron Nelson and Jimmy Demaret at the Willow Springs

course in San Antonio, Texas to raise funds for the American Red Cross. The Texas Open is also taking place at the course and the match attracts a crowd of 8,000. Bing has a 77.

Feb 16 Press reports indicate that Bing has registered for conscription to the Armed Forces as have many other Hollywood stars.

Feb 18 Bing has returned to Phoenix, Arizona and plays a practice round of golf at the Phoenix Country Club.

Feb 19 Starting at 1:30 p.m., Bing plays in a qualifying round for the Phoenix Country Club's Invitational Match play Tournament with Johnny Dawson, Bob Goldwater and Dr. Payne Palmer.

Feb 21 In a match beginning at 1:15 p.m., Bing beats local golfer Keith Downs 2 and 1 in the first round of the match play event.

Feb 22 The Invitational Tournament continues. In the morning, Bing beats Johnny Dawson 1 up on the 20th. green. In the semi-final, Bing loses to Tom Lambie at the 21st. hole. Lambie goes on to win the tournament. Bing catches the last train back to Hollywood.

As you can see, golf almost seemed to play a bigger part in Bing's life than show business at times! Bing visited Phoenix on several more occasions over the years and a press cutting about a 1943 visit follows this article.

We motored west to Palm Springs where I nearly stepped on a rattlesnake. You could have been looking for a new Editor! A visit to the library there produced a mass of press cuttings because Bing had homes there and was a frequent visitor from the 1930s until the 1960s. I have already described the highlight of our trip to Los Angeles and from there it was north on Highway One via Pebble Beach to San Francisco. We had arranged to call in to see Jack Souther in 'Frisco and I purchased a good number of photographs from him for Ron Bosley's collection. Some of the photos had been taken by Bing himself and showed Phillip Crosby as a youth and I have therefore passed these on to Phil.

Priscilla's Crosby Room

Twenty miles south of San Francisco lies San Mateo and we visited with Priscilla Koenig there. Priscilla was Editor of BINGANG for many years and met Bing on many occasions. She showed us her marvellous Crosby room and she even persuaded me to try on one of Bing's jackets. There were some incredible items in Priscilla's collection and I made a short video which I'll show at the Leeds meeting. I also videoed Phil Crosby in Charles Baillie's garden and that too will be shown at Leeds. I could have lost myself looking at the various albums in Priscilla's home but Lake Tahoe beckoned. Kathryn Crosby lives at Genoa, which is near Tahoe, and although I had her address, I did not have her telephone number and I decided not to call unannounced. Our trip back to Las Vegas took us via Lone Pine, where 'Rhythm on the Range' was filmed and Death Valley, where the temperature was 110 degrees Fahrenheit.

It was a great holiday for us and as always there were many Crosbyana experiences.

Priscilla shows Malcolm her Crosby room.

Malcolm Macfarlane

Crosby Songs Bring $45,000 In Bonds

The Arizona Republic newspaper for Sunday, March 7, 1943 carried a picture of Bing with comedian Rags Ragland under the heading 'Fine Points of Dunking Are Discussed'. The two men were at the Phoenix Canteen for Servicemen at Phoenix Union Station and were dunking their doughnuts in their coffee much to the amusement of those present. An article followed the photograph which we have great pleasure in reproducing with grateful thanks to the Arizona Republic.

More than 1,000 Phoenicians and winter visitors crowded the banks of the colorful Arizona Biltmore Hotel pool yesterday afternoon in warm sunshine to hear Bing Crosby offer vocal selections in return for each purchase of an $18.75 bond following a fashion show. Proceeds for entrance to the show went to the Red Cross Canteen at the Union Station, netting approximately $2,000, Mrs. Herbert L. Pratt jr., of the Red Cross revealed.

Total bond sales for the afternoon were $45,150 which included sale of 150 autographed records by the Hollywood crooner for $100 bonds, and several dedicated recordings for $5,000 bonds. Largest purchase of the afternoon was that of a $20,000 bond with the provision that identity of the purchaser be unrevealed.

Introduced by glib-talking Phil Silvers, Crosby made his way to the platform through autograph seekers and explained a 15-minute tardiness by saying one of his horses was dying and he wanted to see at least one finish.

Appearing with the radio star and screen favorite in addition to Silvers was another successful comedian of stage and screen, Rags Ragland, who appeared as one of the spectators and exchanged banter with the vocalist and Silvers, and was the 'victim' of 'magician' Silvers in a

comedy routine.

Also on the show were Jimmy Van Heusen, song writer and accompanist for Crosby, and Johnny Burke, who has collaborated with Van Heusen on many popular song hits including "I've Got a Pocket Full of Dreams", "Beat of my Heart", "Annie Doesn't Live Here Anymore", "Heaven Can Wait", and the latest "Moonlight Becomes You" which was sung by the star.

Bob Goldwater, local merchant, introduced the amiable entertainers, who were off to a quick start with routines about the train trip over and the explanation of the burning Crosby home. The most laughter provoked from the audience came in response to a "hello" routine which included the greetings of two farmers, Bob Hope and 'Red' Skelton, lumbermen, presidents of shampoo companies, and two Maricopa county politicians. The latter act demonstrated the politicians patting each other on the back and simultaneously cleaning each other's pockets.

In response to bond sales the crooner sang "Time Goes By", "I've Heard that Song Before", "Time On My Hands", "Praise the Lord", "Melancholy Baby", and repeated "Fighting Sons of the Navy" for several purchasers....

(Editor: I find these reports of Bing's wartime activities fascinating and wouldn't it have been great to have been there?)

BING'S CONFESSIONS

When visiting Michael O'Toole in June, he showed me a book called 'Mike Yarwood - Confessions' in which Mike Yarwood had compiled lists of favourite likes and dislikes of various celebrities. In the introduction, Mike says:

> *"One of the people I most wanted to appear in the book was the legendary Bing Crosby, who kindly consented to a mere handful of days before his tragic death. Bing personified the word SUPERSTAR and he epitomised everything that was good in showbusiness. He was unaffected by the cruelty which sometimes surrounds showbusiness, and he calmly strode through all the pressures, the disappointments and the heartbreaks that litter the entertainment industry. He was a star for most of his life, and his songs and films have filled great gaps in people's lives, spanning many, many eras.*
>
> *My first recollection of the great man came when I was a small lad. Every Christmas, my parents would take me shopping in Manchester, and the highspot of the outing was a visit to the department store called Lewis's. The shop was be-decked with Christmas decorations - Christmas trees, Father Christmas, silver tinsel and streamers. And relayed over the public address system was good old Bing singing 'White Christmas'. I cherish the memory. I'm sure we all have our own memories of Bing Crosby."*

Later on in the book, Bing's confessions appear opposite a picture of Bing fishing and are reproduced below. Very interesting to note the choices Bing made which tells us quite a lot about the man and how he was feeling a few days before he died. The book was published in 1978 by Sidgwick and Jackson Ltd and the ISBN number is 0 283 98467 8.

BING CROSBY

singer, actor

My ideal virtue	**Sense of humour**
My idea of beauty in nature	**Mountain stream**
My idea of beauty in art	**Renoir**
My favourite study	**The golf swing**
My favourite flower	**Rose**
My favourite colour	**Blue**
My favourite qualities in men	**Candour**
My favourite qualities in women	**Resourcefulness**
My greatest happiness	**Listening to good music**
My greatest misery	**Waiting for tardy people**
My favourite amusement	**Fishing**
My favourite residence	**California**
My favourite authors	**Greene, Le Carré, Maugham, Hemingway**
My favourite poets	**Longfellow**
My favourite musical composer and instrument	**Cole Porter; piano**
My favourite heroes in real life	**Churchill**
My favourite heroines in real life	**Joan of Arc**
My favourite actors and plays	**Olivier; *Hamlet***
My favourite animal	**Dog**
My favourite names	**John, Thomas, Paul, Peter, Max**
My favourite quotation	**Do unto others etc.**
My present state of mind	**Serene**
My motto	**Judge not, lest you be judged**
My signature	Bing Crosby

BING CROSBY
BORN IN TACOMA, WASH. MAY, 2
BING! BING!
AS A YOUNGSTER PLAYING "COWBOYS & INDIANS" SHOUTED "BING! BING! LOUDER THAN THE REST • THE NAME STUCK.
TURNED "JULIUS CAESAR" INTO A COMEDY AT SCHOOL BY RISING AFTER BEING STABBED TO DEATH.
TOURED WITH PAUL WHITEMAN AS A TRIO WITH RINKER & HARRIS
THEN COLUMBIA BROADCASTING SYSTEM AND THE SCREEN!
B-B-B-BLUE OF THE
①
②
③
④
⑤

POSTER-ARTIST HAROLD SEROY CREATED THESE STAR BIOS IN THE 1930s. WATCH FOR MORE BIOS AND AN UPCOMING FEATURE ON SEROY AND CLASSIC MOVIE ART.

Bert Bishop's
BING ON THE BOX

The month of May being that time of year when we celebrate the natal day of our man, we look to the entertainment industry to recognise that event. No trouble with the wireless. Our regular promoters see to that. But television is far less rewarding and apart from the old faithfuls on TNT the only other channel to feature Bing was BBC2, and that to celebrate the 100th. anniversary of Fred Astaire. How unfortunate that the only acknowledgement that the Radio Times could make of Bing's presence in the film was to refer to him as a 'clumsy oaf' by comparison with Astaire. Not one word about his acting or singing. Yes, there's still a lot of groundwork to be done if his position as the premier entertainer of the century is not to be undermined, as the present media generation seem intent in doing. One feels it has been chipping away at Bing's stature for quite some time now. It is hoped that the ICC's Fact File may go some way in redressing the balance in Bing's favour. A leaflet drop over Broadcasting House would be a good start! One time international citizen with a voice and image known to the entire civilised world - more famous than any super-power leader - it was suggested by a high ranking American officer at the signing of the Japanese surrender aboard the USS Missouri that Bing Crosby ought to have been present to have made the historic ceremony complete. When the next millennium commences on the first of January in the year 2001 will that stature as the greatest vocal innovator and all-round personality of the present century still be recognised? We have less than eighteen months to see that it is. Less still if you're one of those who believe the third millennium begins next January!

MARCH		
ROAD TO SINGAPORE	Sky Cinema	4th
ROAD TO ZANZIBAR	Sky Cinema	5th
APRIL		
HIGH SOCIETY	TNT	28th
MAY		
BLUE SKIES	BBC2	8th
HIGH SOCIETY	TNT	27th
THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT	TNT	27th
JUNE		
ROAD TO ZANZIBAR	Sky Cinema	5th

There can be few among the members of the ICC who don't have a VCR and, therefore, the opportunity to view their Crosby films whenever they wish. But watching a screening as it is broadcast holds that extra appeal, if only in the knowledge that there are thousands of others doing the same thing. Savouring the ebb and flow of Crosby - Hope dialogue or the supreme quality of melodious songs of a bygone era sung by one who we believe to be the best in the business. For the latter of those two reasons 'Blue Skies' was unmissable, if only for

The stars of 'Blue Skies' in action.

the added attraction of Fred's "Puttin' On the Ritz" and "Heat Wave" dance routines. The raison d'etre for screening the film being the hundredth anniversary of Mr. Astaire's birth on 10th. May 1899. Following upon the previous edition of BING magazine's reportage of the Karolyn Grimes story there was also the added appeal of paying more attention to the charming sequence with her screen father. Coquettishly responding to her Old Daddy's encouragement it would be less than charitable to say that she didn't steal the scene.

A promising TV tribute to Louis Armstrong turned out to be an inadequate mini-biography and was described by a certain presenter from BBC Radio Norfolk as an example of a 'pygmy of a producer encountering a giant performer'. The Bing content was minimal with no mention of the film PENNIES FROM HEAVEN and only a couple of short clips of Bing and Louis performing the "Now You Has Jazz" number that became their joint trademark along with "Gone Fishin'" - which wasn't featured.

BIRTHDAYS AND BY-LINES

The month of May is, in fact, a period peppered with the birthdays of notable theatrical personalities who performed with Bing. Apart from Fred Astaire there were Irving Berlin, Rosemary Clooney, Joan Collins, Perry Como, James Stewart, Douglas Fairbanks, Stanley Baxter, Peggy Lee, Al Jolson and, most especially, Bob Hope. Many of these were acknowledged on the wireless by way of duets with the Boss with, I noted, that excellent Ken Barnes production 'A Couple Of Song And Dance Men' album being the most featured. The title track and "Top Billing" were the most obvious choices favoured, but I was glad to be reminded yet again, if a reminder were needed, how wonderfully inventive Johnny Mercer's lyrics are by a few playings on various stations of "Spring, Spring, Spring". All the verses abound with the Mercer trademark of inspired creativity where words and phrases are brought into play in rhyming couplets of such simplistic attraction that one wonders why no one had ever thought of them before. But that was his genius. Try these on for size: the comedy in 'If for the stork you pine consider the porcupine', the wittiness of 'To itself each amoeba softly croons Ach du lieber', and the near visual appeal of 'Little skylarks are larking, see them all double parking', and while the imagery of that last line might be more appropriate to swallows there is no escaping the irresistible creativeness of those and many similar examples. And as for the Tin Pan Alley perfection of 'Old poppa dragon-fly is making his wagon fly', if your admiration is not stirred by such a couplet then there is no poetry in you, dear reader! Full marks, of course to the veteran stars who put the song over to such good effect, and to the vivacious backing from the Pete Moore Orchestra who excel with Gene DePaul's composition.

On the general theme of anniversaries, Bing is invariably called upon to celebrate these, be it birthdays, wedding anniversaries or just general affectionate greetings. A nice selection on Bill Rennells' Southern Counties radio each weekday evening at ten o'clock reflects this trend as he plays all listener requests, keeps the chat to the barest minimum and rarely ever talks over the records. This format increases track time by at least forty per cent often meaning an extra opportunity for two or three Bing numbers in any one evening. Particularly enjoyable among a very varied and yet unhackneyed selection was an air-shot from a Chesterfield programme entitled "I Waited A Little Too Long". How encouraging that listeners are given the opportunity to hear Bing's laid back performances from his radio days - and to be able to enjoy a ballad or two that they may have never heard before.

One particular presenter enthusing over her Bing Crosby Special was Christine Prentice of GMR. It would appear that she was overwhelmed by the response to her St. Valentine's Day broadcast, which was an all Bing affair as reported here. Noting that an hour was nowhere near enough she has promised another all-Crosby edition later in the year. To make up for it in the meantime she featured three in a row that very same evening: "Day Dreaming", the re-worked Gallagher and Shean duet and yet another acknowledgement of the inherent romanticism of our lamplighter friend.

BACK FOR THE FUTURE

But not before a scare from Frank Wappat who, very unfortunately, suffered a stroke and was hospitalised for a while. Frank, who broadcasts from the Tyneside area, was remarkably quick to recover sufficiently enough that he was soon back in action with his Time Warp Machine. A really imaginative sequence during one of his Stars On Sunday programmes had Frank transporting listeners back to the early 1930s. There we encountered Bing with his two other Rhythm Boys confreres performing at the Cocoanut Grove of the famous Ambassador Hotel, Los Angeles. With impressive, descriptive narrative that detailed the decor of this Moroccan style hang-out of the rich and famous, Frank enthusiastically described and introduced Gus Arnheim, his orchestra and the performers to realistic canned applause whilst he featured the infectious "Them There Eyes", three more of those great tracks from the closing months of 1930 and an excellent selection of Crosby solos that included "One More Time", "Thanks To You" and a short selection from the next year or so. Wonderful stuff! This column congratulates Frank on his creativeness and, as I'm sure we all do, wishes him well for a continued recovery from what might well have been a career ending seizure.

DEVON CREAM

In fact the entire West Country area has again been playing some of the cream of Crosby and I am impressed by the increasing variety of songs that, having been made available, are constantly dipped into. I believe it was Graham Danton of BBC Radio Devon who said on air that if he brought in his collection of Crosby CDs there'd be no room for any other artiste on his broadcasting bench. No hardship there, Graham! Nudging a little north to Radio Bristol found ICC Member Len Hawkings asking for any or all of Bing's recordings from his birth date 3rd May from the year 1944 in honour of the big day. As there were four recordings, 'a little ambitious' I thought when I heard his letter read out. But well done Len! His request was met in full, plus "Brother Can You Spare A Dime". You see, a little cheek, a little persistence can work wonders!

Chris Robinson - South & West - turns up some interesting snippets relating to the recordings he features and, most especially, likes to trace the classical origin of many pieces of popular music. An example of this was Bing's "The Kiss In Your Eyes" adapted from 'Im Chambre Separee', by Richard Heuberger, and made reference to the resemblance of Bing's signature tune to Gilbert & Sullivan's "Tit Willow" from The Mikado. Again, most will be unaware that Bob Hilliard, who composed "Dear Hearts And Gentle People" pinched the title from a line which read 'Dear friends and gentle hearts' written by Stephen Foster and found among the latter's papers after his death. Needless to say Chris played all the relevant recordings and much, much more, for he is the most prolific among the West Country presenters when it comes to our man, who he only ever refers to by Bing's adopted first name. Chris creates that comfortable feeling of affectionate familiarity which would render the use of 'Crosby' both absolutely unnecessary and quite superfluous. One little whinge: I wish he wouldn't talk over the start or finish of a recording as he sometimes does. But he's not alone in that unfortunate habit. Indeed some presenters, though not Chris, make an art form out of it.

THE KRAFTY YOUNG BING

Compact discs featuring the early years of Cros on KMH were the subject of Stan White's 'phone-in guesting on John Richards' Magical Memories BBC Radio Lincolnshire programme on the 19th. March where, once again, Bing was artiste of the week. Produced in entirety by Barry Whittingham (0115 913 4250) the four currently available albums have a wealth of Bing tracks from the late 1930s when many are of the opinion that his voice was at its best. Stan explained the history of Bing's hosting the very famous Kraft Music Hall and his founding of his own orchestra led by the ex-pianist-arranger from the Hal Kemp band, John Scott Trotter. Of the three tracks played on the programme the final one, "Moon Over Miami", was a great example of the power and range, with just that touch of the 'Crosby cry', that the Old Groaner had at that immensely important time of his career.

THE SPIRIT OF JAZZ

Paul Barnes, famed for his scat crooning to the Henry Mancini orchestral signature tune fade-out to Gold For Grown Ups, has his own pages on his local radio website the address of which is www.BBC.co.UK/RadioNorfolk where news and views of all the best music and artistes can be found. Earlier this year discussions, via the Internet, had been taking place as to the merit of Bing's "Shoe Shine Boy" as a jazz recording. Finding Jimmy Dorsey's accompaniment rather turgid in general, and Dorsey's solo too 'tricksy' in particular, Barnsey went on to say that the jazz content of Bing's vocal was far more in the spirit of jazz. Therefore, we are led to assume that the likeable Cahn - Chaplin number, as recorded by Bing, should rate as a mid-thirties jazz classic. It may not be quite up there with "Someday, Sweetheart" or "Moonburn" but it illustrates Bing's ability to out-perform the orchestra by a musicality which, coupled with that

The stars of 'Dick Tracy in B Flat' - the greatest gathering of recording artistes of its time.

'Crosby cry' again, leaves no doubt as to his jazz roots.

As always, Paul's first programme of every month features the Crosby calendar song - if possible! If not he plays a closely related song either with a similar sentiment or an adaptation of the title. April and May were straightforward enough, but June required a little lateral thinking. "Boo-Hoo" was the title in question and perhaps because Carmen Lombardo was one of the three composers Barnsey played brother Guy Lombardo's version with the Whiteman, Crosby - Rinker recording of "Wistful And Blue" standing in as an acceptable alternative along the lines of being sadly reflective over a mismanaged love affair. With the easy exception of October - "Sierra Sue" - I'm looking forward to his substitutions for the remaining five months, bearing in mind that this column, as with all the other contributors to the magazine, has a third week in June wrap.

Currently, and due to a local newspaper misprint which called Paul's programme "Golf For Grown Ups", he is asking for listeners' suggestions for golfing orientated songs. Needless to say Paul is well aware of the Boss's famous two and plays them quite frequently - though having a preference for the more philosophical "Tomorrow's My Lucky Day". At the time of writing he hasn't heard about "The Little White Pill On the Little Green Hill", but a taped copy is winging his way. However, Golf For Grown Ups is going to stick for a while at least, to the point where Barnsey suggests he shouts Fore! at the commencement of each recording!

STATESIDE

A two hour weekend edition of 'When Radio Was King' spotlighted Bing on a Chicago radio station hosted by Carl Amari on the 17th. and 18th. April. Featured were a couple of Philco Radio Time broadcasts (3/12/47 and 14/4/48), Bing guesting on the Ozzie and Harriet (Nelson) Show, with Doris Day as guests of Bob Hope on Ski Nose's programme and the now internationally famous Dick Tracy In b Flat, Command Performance broadcast that had, surely, just about the greatest gathering of recording artistes of its time. That's a pretty good slice of music, fun and frivolity from a decade blessed with an abundance of talent only too pleased to sell its wares on the wireless.

Heading north to Wisconsin finds Greg Van Beek again hosting a Crosby special on Rich Michaels' Big Band To Broadway show. The occasion being Bing's birthday, and notable for broadcasting for the first time on American radio all the recordings Bing made with Major Glenn Miller whilst in the United Kingdom. These Crosby specials, which also include a St. Patrick's Day bonanza, seem to be a regular fixture in the Great Lakes region of the USA and one has to assume that the programme's producer is happy with the listener figures to warrant a continuation of Greg's knowledgeable appearance as a promoter of the Crosby cause. There may be a follow up coup when both Greg and Rich interview Bob Thompson, who was one of Bing's arrangers. Similarly, Dolores Hope is lined up for a chat with the enterprising pair. For a review, watch this space!

Bert Bishop

MY TWENTY YEARS WITH BING

Ron Field of Australia sent us the following article which first appeared in Family Circle magazine of December 30, 1977. I found it most interesting. See what you think.

Kathryn Crosby talks to Adalene Ross

When Bing Crosby died aged 73 on a Madrid golf course on October 15 this year, the world mourned a show business legend. The man whose name will always be synonymous with the song 'White Christmas', and who was one of the greatest influences on the music of this century, left behind a loving family and a wife who had shared his life and career closely for almost 20 years. Their twentieth anniversary would have been only nine days after his death. In this special interview, possibly the last she gave before Bing died, Kathryn Crosby speaks of that coming anniversary, and the two decades of their marriage it would have celebrated

Kathryn Crosby's eyes were brimming with tears. "I'm having a little trouble with my opening number," my usually cool and collected friend told me, "the one where I sing 'My cup runneth over with love.' I don't know if I'll be able to get through it. I've been trying to rehearse the lines, and the pianist keeps playing the music over and over, but I can't seem to get the words out."

It was March, 1977, only minutes before we were to present a musical benefit fashion show. It was the first time Kathryn had been away from her husband Bing Crosby since his terrible 6-metre fall earlier in the month. The accident occurred while he was taping a television special celebrating his fiftieth year in show business. Now, a worried Kathryn was keeping her commitment to do our show that day because, as she said, "Bing expects promises to be kept." But her thoughts were with him.

At the time, the extent of Bing's injuries was not known. Although he had no broken bones, he had suffered many complications. A ruptured disc in his lower back seemed the most serious problem; he was unable to stand or walk, and the pain was excruciating. Surgery was under discussion. Frankly, thought doctors at Pasadena`s Huntington Hospital, Bing was alive only because he had grabbed at a flimsy piece of scenery and clung to it as he fell.

Kathryn pulled herself together. Composed and glamorous in her white, fox-trimmed Jean Louis evening gown, she went out on the fashion show ramp and sang all of her numbers without a lapse.

"I was thinking of nothing but Bing every minute," Kathryn admitted to me later. "My mind certainly wasn't on what I was doing, and if Bing could have heard me, I'm sure he would have had some smart remark to make," she laughed. "I could concentrate only on Bing, so frail and helpless when I left him a few hours before." Since the accident, Kathryn had been beside him on a trundle bed in the same room "I insisted upon being there," she said, "so I could 'observe', as we say in nursing (Kathryn's also a registered nurse). But all I could do was lie there waiting,

wishing, praying a lot, fidgeting, trying not to make a noise when I moved, so that he could get some much-needed sleep."

"Bing was able to say to me, 'I don't seem to be able to sleep. Do you want to talk to me?' And those words, at three in the morning, were a wonderful sign. 'It was an awful thing - the fall wasn't it, darling?' I whispered. All Bing said about the fall was, 'Wasn't that dumb? ' I did my best to console him. 'No darling, it wasn't dumb. All during rehearsals you worried about people falling. I guess you stopped worrying once the show was over.' "

Sipping a glass of champagne after our show, Kathryn talked more about the accident that had so nearly changed their lives: "At first, I was overwhelmed with gratitude that Bing was alive. Then a sense of outrage came over me that such a good, kind man, who never hurt anyone in his life, should have such a terrible thing happen to him. Two of our children, Mary Frances and Nathaniel, were standing at the side of the stage when Bing took that last step. I was downstairs in the dressing-room when I heard gasps, and I knew something dreadful had happened. The children were wonderful. Nathaniel cleaned up the dressing-rooms, picked up our clothes and took them to the hotel. Mary Frances was up all night phoning friends and relatives to reassure them that Bing was all right. Mary Frances even reached Alan Fisher (the Crosby's butler) in England where he was on holiday, and told him there was no need to rush home."

Kathryn asked, "Do you know what Bing did when he was being taken out on the stretcher to the ambulance? In an attempt to keep things as normal as possible, because be could see how upset everyone was, he sang 'Off we go, into the wild blue yonder...' Imagine!"

Kathryn brightened. "Bing and I will celebrate our twentieth anniversary this year (October 24) and we're going to make it the best anniversary anyone ever had. We didn't do a thing on our nineteenth anniversary. We weren't even together. Bing was at his duck club with our oldest son Harry and I was home alone. But Bing did remember to telephone that night. 'Harry and I had a fine shoot,' he said, 'and, by the way, happy anniversary and I love you.'."

"Our twentieth year started our with the whole family opening in *Crosby and Friends*. The show premiered in Houston, and Bing was so good to all my Texas relatives who came up from my hometown, West Columbia, Tex., to see our show. I have fond memories of that time. And, because of the success of our opening, we went on to do more shows -- in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Las Vegas. New York and in London.

"In London, Bing and I took walks together around Piccadilly Circus, and we had the pleasure of seeing Nathaniel (a one handicap golfer) play some really good golf. From London we went on to Scotland. where Mary Frances and I did *The Heiress*, on stage in Edinburgh. Bing and the boys, Harry and Nathaniel, travelled all over England, Scotland and Germany. And Bing took us on a quick trip to Paris, but he was smart enough to do it on Saint's Day, when all the stores were closed and we couldn't buy anything!"

"But Bing did so many sweet things for me on that trip," Kathryn said. "He played golf with me at the Princess Course at Gleneagles, Scotland, even though I am terrible at the game. Bing was so encouraging -- he bragged about the shortest drives I made. I lost eight balls, and he didn't say a word."

Kathryn had mixed feelings about their two-week appearance in New York City. "Someone gave me a terrible review," she said. "When Bing read it, his eyes glazed and he said, in real anger, 'They hate you because you're pretty.' It's funny, Bing hasn't told me that in a long time. It was nice to know he still thinks so."

Kathryn, now 43, was only 21 when she fell in love with the celebrated crooner 30 years her senior. They met in Hollywood on a Paramount Pictures movie lot. Kathryn, a beauty contest winner and rising young actress, was rushing to wardrobe one afternoon when she bumped into the studio's biggest star -- Bing Crosby. The blue-eyed crooner was a recent widower with four sons (one a year younger than Kathryn), and Hollywood columnist Louella Parsons had called him "the most eligible man on the face of the earth." After that fateful bump, Bing and Kathryn began a courtship that lasted several years. Three times they made plans to be married -- but each time Bing called it off. After the third break-off, Kathryn refused to see Bing for over a year. Then he sent her a letter asking her to marry him "anyplace, anywhere, anytime." Before Kathryn accepted, she made him promise that she could continue with her acting and pursue her nursing and teaching degrees. He agreed to her terms on the telephone because she still was sworn to her vow not to see him unless "it was inside a church with the door locked." Within 24 hours of their conversation,

they eloped to Las Vegas, where. on October 24, 1957, they were married in the chapel of St. Anne's Roman Catholic Church.

"Bing had his reasons for breaking off our engagements," Kathryn sighed. "Although I didn't understand at the time. I know now that he was right. Bing has the highest regard for the responsibilities of his life -- his children, his church, his friends, his public. He wanted to he sure that our marriage was right in every way."

"Nobody else gave our marriage much of a chance," Kathryn admits. "I've never had my wedding ring off, and I've never asked but I'm sure it's only brass. Bing's manager bought it, and probably didn't want to invest much into something that might not last." (Actually, she wears two wedding bands: the second one belonged to Bing's late mother. Kathryn wears no other jewellery.)

"In the end, our difficult courtship was a good thing," she continued. "By the time we were married, we had thrashed out our differences. Maybe that's the trouble with a lot of marriages today. The two people involved haven't discussed their problems ahead of time, and expect everything to turn out moonlight and roses, which it probably is not going to be.

"I'm glad I married an older man. When I married Bing he was already formed, his character was set; in other words, I knew what I was getting. With a younger man you can't tell how he will develop with the years."

"And, oh yes, Bing's sons took a lot of teasing after the wedding, but they were always nice to me. I would like to think that I handled the situation with grace. I wasn't their mother so I didn't try to be. Instead, I did everything possible to be their friend. To this day, Gary, the eldest, the twins Dennis and Phillip, and Lindsay, the youngest, are my friends. We see each other often.

"Bing and I have had a wonderful life. We have shared so much and, "Kathryn said with emphasis, "there is still so much for us to share. We love best taking long walks together, holding hands and talking about everything, or not talking at all." ("It really is the most amazing marriage," butler Alan Fisher said to me once. "Although upon occasions we have had some truly epic silences in the house. Mr. and Mrs. Crosby are two people who obviously take pleasure in the company of each other. We rarely have guests. The two or them simply enjoy being alone together.")

The Crosbys' three children were born within the first four years of their marriage. Harry Lillis Crosby III, 19, named after his father (Bing gained his nickname as a young boy from his favorite comic strip, "Bingville Bugle"), is a musician. After a year in college, Mary Frances, 17, Bing's only daughter, has been accepted by the American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco. Nathaniel, 15, hopes to combine golfing competition with a teaching career.

"The children have learned so much from their father." Kathryn said. 'He's a strict parent, but strict with love – there's a difference. Bing detests sloppiness, cannot abide arrogance or profanity and just naturally expects good manners. The children absolutely adore their father -- but they also respect him."

When questioned about how she would feel if her children had sexual relationships outside of marriage, Kathryn replied: "I am sure it is possible for young people to enter into a loving relationship outside of marriage. But," she added' "if it were my children, I'd kill them. As for their father, I cannot tell you how angry that Irishman would be."

Talking more about their 20 years together, Kathryn said: "I'm afraid that I have caused Bing some painful moments. As an example, once I volunteered him, without his permission, to be master of ceremonies for a charity fund-raiser. Bing does so much for charity -- he's raised millions -- that naturally I expected him to do this for me. Bing felt that it wasn't night for me to volunteer his services without asking. After all. he said, he wouldn't presume to do that to me. Right up to the last minute I thought he'd break down and show up. I absolutely panicked. But Bing dug in his heels and did not go."

"Still," she said. "in all our married years we have never had a fight. Oh. we've had some pretty sticky moments when we didn't see eye to eye, but a fight -- never! Bing chooses to remain silent when trouble brews. Sometimes he hasn't talked to me for days, even longer. Once he said to me, 'Kathryn, it is better not to speak in anger. And you must realise that sometimes when I've been quiet it is because the words I might have said would have been too hard for you, or for me, to bear. There is so much talking things out these days, verbalising and all that, but I think Bing's way may be a lot wiser."

"Bing is no-nonsense and disciplined, so disciplined that he can eat one half of a biscuit. At the same time he's unfailingly kind, fun-loving and witty. In times of trouble. he's so sweet, so tender; it's impossible to be sad around him."

Kathryn's thoughts returned to the present, and she continued: "Before we know it, Bing will be able to play golf again, he'll be able to sing 'White Christmas'--and we'll even be able to trip the light fantastic. Yes, it will all happen."

"I guess the sound of Bing is woven into the tapestry of many lives. But," she added, "I'm luckier than his fans for I get to hear the special things. For example, hearing him say: 'Late again!' 'What do you mean Mary Frances has a date?', 'Nathaniel should help weed the garden and not spend so much time on the golf course!' or, 'What do you mean, Indianapolis, for five weeks?' "

Hollywood gossips were never able to wag tongues about the Crosby marriage. There were no scandals, no rumors about their private lives. They were never part of the social scene, never tossed fancy parties. Their idea of celebrating a momentous occasion was to sit all by themselves, late at night in the kitchen, spooning up corn flakes!

It is obvious to those who knew the Crosbys -- when Bing was alive -- that the reason their marriage endured, and happily, was because they both had the same values, the same reverence for the things they believed important: respect for each other, the sanctity of their home, a commitment to the children they brought into the world and the Catholic religion they shared.

This Christmas will be a sad one for the Crosby family Bing has left behind. But their memories of all the happy ones they have shared will keep his memory bright in their hearts forever.

Keeping Track

A Compact Disc Review by Jim Reilly

BMG tell me that their Bing albums are still on hold but they have assured me that they will let me know well in advance when any decision on release dates is made. There are now four albums on hold the latest being "Bing Crosby Meets Nat King Cole & The Andrews Sisters". I have a fair number of CDs to review this time around, with two from MCA, three more in the chronological series from Jonzo Records, and among others four radio material releases. I am also pleased to see that all five of Bing's recordings with Eddie Heywood are now available on CD albeit that they come from France and then there is the Fred Astaire set that Ken Barnes has put together for EMI.

My Favorite Broadway Songs **MCA Special Products MCAD21140** **USA**

They Say It's Wonderful
Some Enchanted Evening
If I Loved You
Close As Pages In A Book
People Will Say We're In Love
No Other Love
I Love You (Grieg)
Oh What A Beautiful Morning
I've Never Been In Love Before
I Still See Elisa

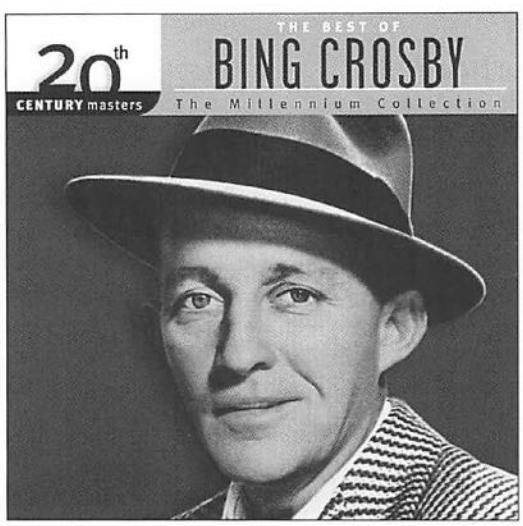
Our US representative Wig Wiggins mentioned this CD in his last column. This is, as you probably know, the sixth in this popular series of albums under the banner of "My Favorite". It is an excellent CD which I have enjoyed playing; the quality is very good and it is well worth adding to your collections. One small error on the sleeve shows "I Love You" incorrectly as being the Cole Porter version, but other than that Wig and Bob Zipkin should be congratulated on another fine CD. It is also available on a shortened audiocassette as for some reason we lose the titles "I've Never Been In Love Before" and "I Still See Elisa". The price of this CD varies depending upon where you are able to purchase it.

Running Time: 30:54 Price: $6-$8

The Best Of Bing Crosby
The Millennium Collection **20th Century Masters MCA MCAD-11942** **USA**

Swinging On A Star
I'll Be Seeing You
White Christmas (1947)
Pennies From Heaven
It's Been A Long Long Time
Dear Hearts And Gentle People
Don't Fence Me In
McNamara's Band
Play A Simple Melody
Far Away Places
Chattanoogie Shoeshine Boy
Around The World

This is one of a series of 16 albums released by MCA to celebrate the Millennium but unfortunately, there is nothing new for collectors to celebrate on this particular CD. It does however serve to keep Bing before the public and is a pleasant enough album of Crosby standards. The quality is good without having that extra touch of brightness of the recent albums from MCA UK. Running Time: 35.35 Price: $12



The Chronological Bing Crosby Volume 5 **Jonzo Records JZCD-5** **UK**

I'm On A Crest Of A Wave
That's My Weakness Now
Georgie Porgie
Lonesome In The Moonlight
My Suppressed Desire
Rhythm King
Makin' Whoopee
Let's Do It, Let's Fall In Love

Because My Baby Don't Mean Maybe Now
Out Of Town Gal
Wa-Da-Da (Everybody's Doin' It Now)
That's Grandma
Christmas Melodies Pt. 1
Christmas Melodies Pt. 2
I'll Get By
Rose Of Mandalay
I'm Crazy Over You
Susianna
If I Had You

All the tracks on this album are excellent and there is a distinct lack of the surface noise we have come to associate with some of the early Bing recordings previously on CD. With the exception of 'Lonesome In The Moonlight' and 'That's Grandma' all the tracks have appeared previously on CD. It is well known by Crosby buffs that some of the titles used are of dubious authenticity - this is explained in John McNicholas' excellent notes for those that aren't in the picture.

Running Time: 59.37 Price: see below

The Chronological Bing Crosby Volume 6 **Jonzo Records JZCD-6** **UK**

The Spell Of The Blues
Let's Do It Let's Fall In Love
My Kinda Love (W401562-C)
Coquette
My Angeline
My Kinda Love (W148073-3)
Till We Meet
Louise (W148086-3)
I'm In Seventh Heaven
So The Bluebirds And The Blackbirds Got Together
Louise (W148428-2)
Little Pal
Reaching For Someone
Oh Miss Hannah
Orange Blossom Time
Your Mother And Mine
S'posin'
I Kiss Your Hand Madame
Baby Oh Where Can You Be
At Twilight

Again, the quality is excellent and there is a lovely clarity to all the tracks. This is a very pleasant mix of Bing's earlier recordings with some great arrangements and I particularly like the Dorsey Brothers orchestra numbers. It is interesting to compare Whiteman's much slower approach to 'My Kinda Love' and Bing's different interpretation of both versions of this song. All of the titles have in fact appeared on CD previously although they are scattered around quite a number of different albums - it is nice to now get them all under one roof so to speak. Running Time: 65.08

Price: JZCD 5 & 6 - These CDs are only available in the UK and the rest of Europe from Jonzo Records PO Box 212, Harrow Middlesex HA3 7LD. Price £8.65 including pp. £17.00 for both JZCD 5 & 6. Cheques to be made payable to Jonzo Records. USA and Canadian Members can obtain copies from Wig Wiggins (Address inside front cover).

The Chronological Bing Crosby Volume 18 **Jonzo Records JZCD-18** **UK**

Would You (-A)
Would You (-B)
Would You (-C)
Robins And Roses
I Got Plenty Of Nuttin' (-A)
I Got Plenty Of Nuttin' (-B)
It Ain't Necessarily So (-A)
It Ain't Necessarily So (-D)
Robins And Roses (Parody)
Take My Heart
Empty Saddles (-A)
Empty Saddles (-C)
Roundup Lullaby
I Can't Escape From You
The House Jack Built For Jill (-A)
The House Jack Built For Jill (-B)
I'm An Old Cowhand
Song Of The Islands
Aloha Oe
So Do I
Pennies From Heaven
Let's Call A Heart A Heart
One Two Button Your Shoe

The quality of all the tracks is exceptionally good and to quote a familiar phrase of mine I am pleased to add this album to my collection. 'Robins And Roses', 'It Ain't Necessarily So', 'I Can't Escape From You', 'The House Jack Built For Jill' together with most of the alternate takes make their debuts to CD on this album. There are not many songs that I really want to sit down and listen to three times in a row but I am happy to make an exception with 'Would You'. We get true variety with ballads, country and Hawaiian favourites together with songs from shows and films - what more could you want? This CD is only available in the UK and the rest of Europe from Jonzo Records PO Box 212, Harrow Middlesex HA3 7LD. Price £10.65 including pp. (or two for £21). Cheques to be made payable to Jonzo Records. USA and Canadian Members can obtain copies from Wig Wiggins (Address inside front cover).

Running Time: 70.40

Bing Crosby & Friends **Vocalion CDUS 3000** **UK**

w Dick Haymes & The Andrews Sisters:- There's No Business Like Show Business, Anything You Can Do w Bob Hope:- Put It There Pal, Road To Morocco, w Al Jolson:- Alexander's Ragtime Band, The Spaniard Who Blighted My Life, w Judy Garland:- Yah-Ta-Ta-Yah-Ta-Ta (Talk Talk Talk), You've Got Me Where You Want Me, Connecticut, Mine, w Mary Martin:- Wait Till The Sun Shines Nellie, Lily Of Laguna, w Johnny Mercer:- Mister Meadowlark, On Behalf Of The Visiting Firemen, Small Fry, Mr Crosby & Mr Mercer, w The Andrews Sisters:- Freedom Train, Pistol Packin' Mama, Don't Fence Me In, w Evelyn Knight:- How It Lies How It Lies, w Connee Boswell: Yes Indeed w Mary Martin & Jack Teagarden:- The Waiter The Porter And The Upstairs Maid, w the Les Paul Trio:- It's Been A Long Long Time, w Carole Richards:- Sunshine Cake: San Fernando Valley

When I learnt of this album from fellow member Michael O'Toole, I thought we would be getting a repeat of other CDs with the same title and I was therefore very pleasantly surprised when I got my copy. Of course there are a number of duplications but this is more than made up for by the inclusion of all four of Judy Garland's commercial recordings with Bing, Mary Martin's 'Lily Of Laguna' (making its CD debut) and 'How It Lies How It Lies' appearing for the first time on a Bing CD. I am however rather puzzled as to how 'San Fernando Valley' found its way into this collection of songs - the otherwise excellent sleeve notes indicate that Bob Hope sings this with Bing (he must have been a silent partner). All tracks are reportedly remastered from 78s and the sound quality is indeed very good. This is a nice CD (if you don't mind the repeats) and I am sure that you will be pleased to add it to your collections. The front sleeve design is similar to the Autobiography set and the label name rings bells from the past - I wonder if there is any connection with Decca?
Running Time: 73.38 Price: £8.99

Bing Crosby The Road To Morocco **Nostalgia (A & R Productions) NSTC029** **Italy**

Swinging On A Star
Road To Morocco
South America Take It Away
Connecticut
Pistol Packin' Mama
Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate The Positive
Yah-Ta-Ta-Yah-Ta-Ta (Talk Talk Talk)
Put It There Pal
Smile Right Back At The Sun
White Christmas (1947)
Don't Fence Me In
Mine
You Belong To My Heart
It's Been A Long Long Time
I Can't Begin To Tell You
Sunday Monday Or Always
San Fernando Valley
I Love You (Porter)

I am indebted to my friend and fellow member, Phil Clarke for loaning me this CD so that I could review it. It is a pleasant compilation of Crosby tunes with good sound quality. 'Smile Right Back At The Sun' makes what to my knowledge is only its second appearance on CD, but apart from the three Judy Garland tracks 'Connecticut', 'Yah-Ta-Ta-Yah-Ta' and 'Mine' most of the other titles have made fairly regular appearances. Phil purchased his copy from Tower Records, London. To date I have not been able to locate it in my local stores
Running Time: 50.56 Price: £4.99

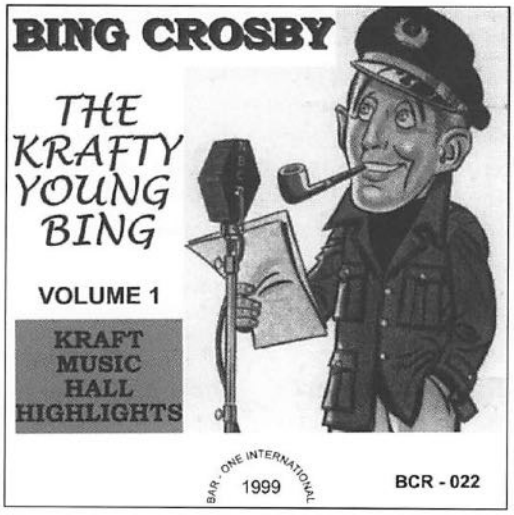
Bing Crosby **Cameo CD3575** **UK**

I've Got My Captain Working For Me Now
Blue Skies
You Made Me Love You
All By Myself
Everybody Step
You Keep Coming Back Like A Song
Easter Parade
Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate The Positive
By The Light Of The Silvery Moon
Swinging On A Star
Deep In The Heart Of Texas
Where The Blue Of The Night (1940)
Be Honest With Me
You Are My Sunshine
Beautiful Dreamer
I'm Thinking Tonight Of My Blue Eyes
Darling Je Vous Aime Beaucoup
San Antonio Rose

I am indebted to member Derek Perkins for letting me know of this CD. The quality is very good and to my knowledge this is the first time that 'I'm Thinking Tonight Of My Blue Eyes' and 'By The Light Of The Silvery Moon' (commercial recording) have appeared on a Crosby CD. 'Darling Je Vous Aime Beaucoup' has only made one previous appearance and 'Be Honest With Me' has only had a handful of previous appearances on CD. With most of the songs from the film 'Blue Skies' together with Bing's hits plus the rarer numbers mentioned this makes for very enjoyable listening. I just wish that I could tell you where you could get the CD but my extensive research was to no avail.

Bing Crosby On Radio

Following on from The Chesterfield Shows that I reviewed last year, Bar One Records have now dipped into the Kraft Music Hall with many excellent extracts from the shows. There are four albums dedicated to KMH with the apt title "The Krafty Young Bing" and generally, the quality of the material used is good. There is a small amount of "crackle and pop" (and the occasional poor track) on these discs but to their credit Bar One have made a genuine attempt to use the correct speed throughout. If you browse through the titles, you will see some marvellous selections like 'Hometown', 'I've Heard That Song Before', 'Down Where The Trade Winds Blow', 'Some Sunny Day', 'Thanks For The Memory', 'When The Swallows Come Back To Capistrano', 'The Moon Won't Talk', 'Indiana', 'Birth Of The Blues', 'Can I Forget You', 'I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now' (I've always wished Bing had made a commercial recording of this lovely song), 'Time On My Hands', etc. etc. and I am sure that there is something here for everyone. As per the previous Bing On Radio discs these are priced at £10.00 each including packaging and posting (please make cheques payable to B Whittingham). To order all four volumes contact Barry Whittingham, "El Rancho Grande" 25c Garton Close, Cinderhill, Nottingham, NG6 8RZ.



The Krafty Young Bing Volume 1 **Bar One Records BCR-22**

1. Kraft Intro: When The Midnight Choo Choo, 2. Hometown, 3. My Little Girl, 4. You're A Sweetheart, 5. Virginia Lee, 6. I Thought About You, 7. Confucius Say, 8. You're An Education, 9. Naturally, 10. Whispers In The Dark, 11. Down Where The Trade Winds Blow, 12. Make-Believe Island, 13. Pale Venetian Moon, 14. Two Hearts That Pass In The Night, 15. When The Swallows Come Back To Capistrano, 16. Thanks For The Memory, 17. I've Got A Lot In Common With You, 18. Marie, 19. When You Wore A Tulip, 20. If It's The Last Thing I Do, 21. I Don't Want To Get Well, 22. Sleepy Lagoon, 23. Why Don't You Fall In Love With Me, 24. Good Morning Mr Zip-Zip-Zip, 25. Some Sunny Day, 26. Brazil, 27. I've Heard That Song Before, 29. Ya Got Me, 30. Redwing.
Running Time: 69.00

The Krafty Young Bing Vol. 2 **Bar One Records BCR-23**

1. Intro by Alan Dell: The Moon Won't Talk, 2. Thank Your Lucky Stars, 3. Call Me Up Some Rainy Afternoon, 4. One Song, 5. Cuddle Up A Little Closer, 6. Little Lady Make-Believe, 7. Hello Hawaii, 8. Flat Foot Floogie, 9. Lovelight In The Starlight, 10. Moon Over Miami, 11. Everything's In Rhythm With My Heart, 12. You, 13. Where Are You, 14. Scatterbrain, 15. I Can't Believe That You're In Love With Me, 16. I'm Looking At The World Through Rose-Coloured Glasses, 17. Indiana, Back Home In 18. You're A Lucky Guy, 19. Moonlight On The Ganges, 20. Ballin' The Jack, 21. Love's Old Sweet Song, 22. Gypsy Love Song, 23 Birth Of The Blues, 24. Show Me The Way To Go Home, 25. You Took The Words Right Out Of My Heart, 26. Dipsy Doodle, 27. Sympathy, 28. That Old Feeling, 29. Rosalie, 30. Can I Forget You, 31. I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now.
Running Time: 71.22

The Krafty Young Bing Vol. 3 **Bar One Records BCR-24**

1. Hail KMH, 2. Says My Heart, 3. The Umbrella Man, 4. Get Out And Get Under, 5. The Man With The Mandolin, 6. I Know That You Know, 7. Angel In Disguise, 8. Ti-Pi-Tin, 9. Blue Orchids, 10. In An Old Dutch Garden, 11. Love Is All, 12. Oh You Crazy Moon, 13. Tell Me Little Gypsy, 14. Play Fiddle Play, 15. If I Should Lose You, 16. I'm Building Up To An Awful Letdown, 17. Stop And Reconsider, 18. Let That Be A Lesson To You, 19. The Little Red Fox, 20. The Woodpecker Song, 21. Ma He's Making Eyes At Me, 22. I Can't Love You Anymore, 23. Playmates, 24. Just Like Taking Candy From A Baby, 25. Six Lessons From Madame La Zonga, 26. With A Twist Of The Wrist, 27. Keep An Eye On Your Heart, 28. Ta-Ra-Ra-Boom-De-Ay, 29. Chattanooga Choo-Choo, 30. Bi-I-Bi, 31. How About You, 32. All My Life, 33. Say The Word And It's Yours, 34. Long Ago And Far Away (Rainger / Robin)
Running Time: 71.19

The Krafty Young Bing Vol. 4 **Bar One Records BCR-25**

1. Moonrise On The Lowlands, 2. Desire, 3. Lost, 4. West Wind, 5. Take My Heart, 6. One Night In Monte Carlo, 7. On The Sentimental Side, 8. I Simply Adore You, 9. Smiles, 10. Remember Me, 11. How Could You, 12. You're Here You're There You're Everywhere, 13. Time On My Hands, 14. Someone Else May Be There While I'm Gone, 15. At Long Last Love, 16. Have You Forgotten, 17. That Sly Old Gentleman From Featherbed Lane, 18. Ciribiribin / Ciribiribin parody with Bob Burns, 19. After All, 20. Some Of These Days, 21. With All My Heart, 22. One Two Button Your Shoe, 23. So Do I, 24. Let's Call A Heart A Heart, 25. On The Beach At Waikiki, 26. Lost And Found
Running Time: 69.38

GUEST APPEARANCES

Eddie Heywood 1944 - 1946 **Classics1038** **France**

21 Tracks (5 Bing) Save Your Sorrow For Tomorrow, Baby Won't You Please Come Home, That Little Dream Got Nowhere, I've Found A New Baby and Who's Sorry Now.

I was excited to learn of this album through our American representative Wig Wiggins and I was certainly very pleased to add it to my collection. Although in general I am not a great jazz fan, I particularly like Eddie Heywood's arrangements, which are laid back and easy on the ear. This CD includes all five of the songs Bing recorded with the band and I find it surprising that most of the songs have not found their way onto CD before now. To my knowledge 'Who's Sorry Now' has only appeared on one CD and the other four tiles are making their debut appearances here.
Price £9.99

Fred Astaire The Complete London Sessions (3CDs) EMI 7243 5 20045 2 2

57 Tracks (12 Bing) A Couple Of Song And Dance Men, Top Billing, Roxie, Spring Spring Spring, How Lucky Can You Get, Mr Keyboard Man, In The Cool Cool Cool Of The Evening, I've A Shooting Box In Scotland, Sing, Pick Yourself Up, Top Billing Reprise and Session Sound Bites

I briefly mentioned that Ken Barnes was working on this set in the last issue of BING and I must say that it is very nicely put together. No one who likes Fred Astaire can fail to like this set which is a combination of his early and late recordings. Ken has written some very enjoyable and informative sleeve notes and in addition to the eleven tracks Bing recorded with Fred, we have a bonus track of session "Sound Bites".

Running Time 3 Hours Approx.
Price: £16.99

La Paloma **Trikont Trikont US-0241** **Germany**

27 Tracks (1 Bing?) La Paloma. Amazingly enough this CD only has one song on it by 27 different artists. Michael Crampton told me about it and I had to see it to believe it (I suppose my name should be Thomas). Apparently, there are collectors out there who will buy CDs of this nature - I thought that I had seen everything. I am told that they even issue double albums with the same format "One Song". Even though it is dubious whether Bing made this recording the company who issued the CD gave a plug to the ICC in their liner notes thus "Want to know more about Bing? Why not join the International Crosby Circle secretary / treasurer Michael Crampton - and his address". This was good of them particularly as all the other notes were in German. I only included this one as a matter of interest as I do not know where you can obtain copies.

I have recently put together the finishing touches to the first Supplement of my book "The Songs Of Bing Crosby On Compact Disc". This covers a period of three years from 1996 and includes details of about 100 CDs not included in the book. The format is the same as for the book and if all goes to plan, it will be available by the end of the year. To avoid disappointment please complete the flyer (enclosed with this copy of the magazine) to let me know whether you want a copy of the Supplement reserved for you. I would like to take the opportunity to thank all the members who again have helped me by letting me know of new releases; any such assistance is much appreciated.

Jim Reilly

THE WORLD'S MOST SENSATIONAL RECORD
Duets by BING CROSBY and CONNIE BOSWELL
02492 { BASIN STREET BLUES
BOB WHITE (Whatcha gonna swing to-night)
This will be the sensation record of the year. If ever there was a record to please the Crosby fans, Boswell fans, the man in the street and the swing fan, this is it.
Brunswick
RECORDS FOR DECEMBER, 1937
HEAR WHAT YOU WANT—WHEN YOU WANT IT—
ONLY ON A GRAMOPHONE RECORD

PUZZLE

SUSAN ISHIDA

CROSBY CROONS When Bing sang Irving Berlin's "White Christmas" 50 years ago in the film *Holiday Inn*, the tune captivated the American public, gave a taste of home to the GIs overseas—and won an Oscar. Reading up, down, forward, backward or diagonally find 71 of The Groaner's 1,600-plus other recordings. Leftover letters name his final recording, made just ten days before his death in 1977 (see page 75). —*Jack C. Cooper*

T N A V I V N O B T E M P T A T I O N M
E E M Y B L U E H E A V E N L B E T S Y
S M A R T Y A A Y N I Y O O W S D P A W
I M N F R O N M D D L E E L A R U A Y O
D A N L O K D Y O E O S O A Y E J O S M
A Z I L S R Z U B R N I H V S M Y M I A
R M V A A A T S O L G N I A G A E A S N
A Y E M L L E W N Y A D O I D L H L I L
P G R S I Y A E O E M E E V A W T A E H
A A S W E K V E G N A E Y N Y Y S E T E
T L A K Y S E T N I F D C A B R A H A M
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M A Y B E U A I S S O N U M D O T N O T
D L W N S O R L E L E O N O A S A O O R
O O A O T L I E I R A M A R Y L O U T E
O N L O I C A E R M R T B Y D D U B Y M
L G T E L Y T S O E N O L A M Y L L O M
E A Z W L E N I M E V O L N I O S U A U
Y G Y E N O L A E N I H T I D A I D O S
M O N A L I S A M T S I R H C E T I H W

ABRAHAM
AGAIN
ALWAYS
AMOR
(The) ANNIVERSARY WALTZ
AT LAST
AURA LEE
AVALON
AVE MARIA
BAIA
BETSY
BON VIVANT
CLOUDS
DARK EYES
DAY BY DAY
HEAT WAVE
HEY JUDE
HO HUM!
HOOT MON
IDA I DO
IOWA
LA MER
LAZY
LIZA
LONG AGO (and Far Away)
MAGNOLIA
MARIE
MARY LOU
MAYBE
MAY I?
MELANCHOLIE
MEMORIES
MILADY
MINE
MOLLY MALONE
MONA LISA
MY BLUE HEAVEN
MY BUDDY
MY GAL SAL
MY LOVE
MY PET
MY WOMAN
NOBODY
NOEL
OHIO
ON THE ALAMO
PARADISE
ROSALIE
SAY "SI SI"
SHINE
SING
SKYLARK
SMALL FRY
SMARTY
SO IN LOVE
SORRY
STILL
STYLE
SUMMERTIME
SWEET LI'L
TEA FOR TWO
TEMPTATION
TENDERLY
THANKS
THINE ALONE
TOM DOOLEY
TOO LATE
WHITE CHRISTMAS
WOULD YOU
YES INDEED!
YOU DO

ANNOUNCEMENT

THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

34th ANNUAL DINNER/MEETING

MANSION HOUSE, ROUNDAY PARK LEEDS

SUNDAY OCTOBER 3rd 1999 3pm - 10pm

A cordial and warm invitation to all International Crosby Circle members, their partners and friends to attend our forthcoming dinner/meeting in the attractive setting of Roundhay Park, Leeds

The dinner menu will be

Cream of Tomato and Orange Soup

Loin of Pork wrapped in Pastry, filled with an Apple Stuffing and Cider Sauce

Rich Chocolate and Amaretti Terrine with fresh Strawberries & Double Cream

Freshly Ground Coffee and Mints

Please book by sending a cheque for £15 to Michael Crampton

Tickets will be available at the meeting

Accommodation can be obtained by contacting the Rydal Bank Hotel

Telephone: 0113 266 1178

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